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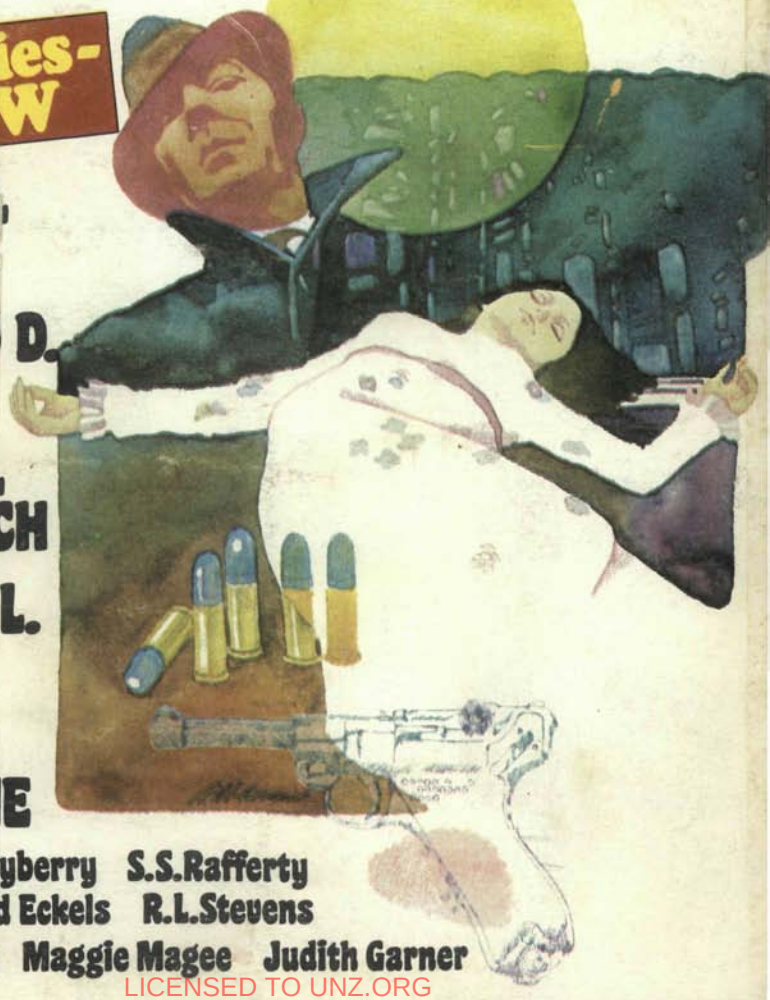

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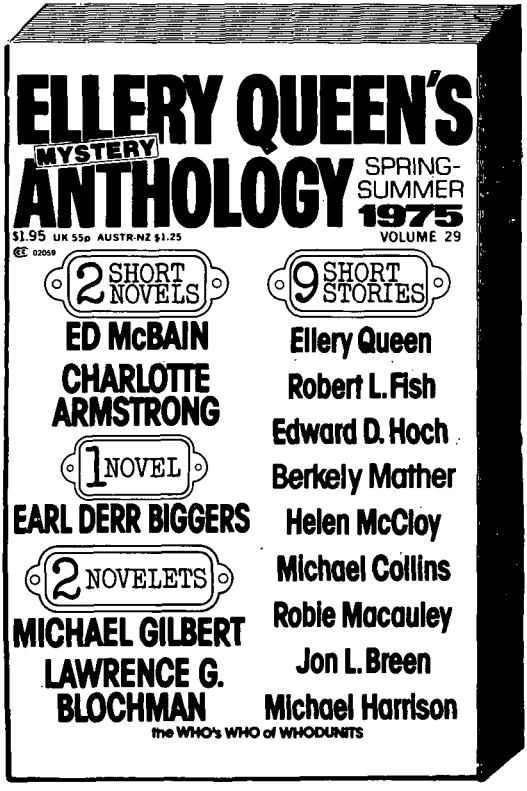

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The World's Leading Mystery Magazine

ELLERY QUEEN'S
Mystery Magazine

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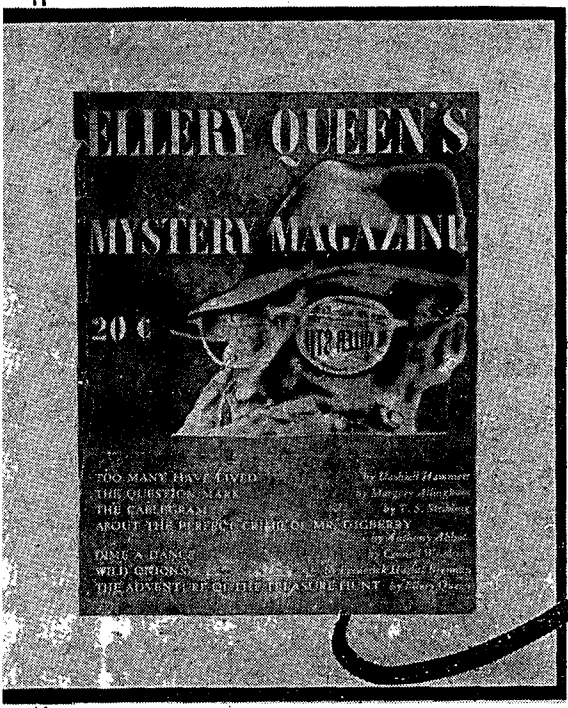

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a NEW Petrella story by

MICHAEL GILBERT

first publication in the United States

Corky Williams looked like a cherub. But he was one of the shiftiest, smoothest, most accomplished liars in the district, with an impressive gift for convincing detail. And then there was Corky's mother . . . The case that clinched Petrella's promotion to Sergeant . . .

BREACH OF THE PEACE

by MICHAEL GILBERT

"Reading aloud," said Sergeant Gwilliam, "writing, including handwriting, spelling, and punctuation, and the first four rules in arithmetic, including Imperial weights and measures and simple fractions."

"Simple fractions."

"Right. Vulgar fractions are for Inspectors. Also decimals." The Sergeant contemplated the tattered copy of Police Regulations sourly. "You may have wondered why I'm still a Sergeant—"

"As a matter of fact," said Petrella, "I had."

"Vulgar fractions," said Gwilliam. "Next comes geography. Especially the geography of the British Isles. Most important that. Suppose you're sent off to arrest someone in Musselburgh. No good saying, 'Where the hell's that?' Is it?" The vexed subject of promotion was once again under discussion.

Normally, as the Police Regulations point out, a constable must have completed five years' service—*the last two being free from punishment other than reprimand or caution*—before he can be considered for the lofty rank of Sergeant; and four years before he can even take the exam. But there is a wise proviso to all this.

If he manages to "satisfy the

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Chief Officer of Police" that he is a special case, he may be allowed to jump the queue. And in the six months Petrella had spent at Scotland Yard and the two years he had been at Highside, quite a few Special Reports had found their way onto his superior's desk.

Superintendent Haxtell had even gone so far as to suggest that he might be able to skip the exam.

"You're educated," he said. 'Got School Certificate, or whatever they call it nowadays, I expect."

But Petrella was doubtful. He had been comprehensively educated, but on somewhat unorthodox lines. "I've got a Spanish Certificate of Instruction," he said, "and a pass degree from an Egyptian University. Also a Certificate of the Elementary degree of Competence in Viniculture—"

"I think you'd better take the exam," said Haxtell.

So Petrella borrowed the necessary textbooks and renewed his acquaintance with Imperial weights and measures and the geography of the British Isles. He was memorizing the rivers of the East Coast, when the riot call came through.

"Church Hall," said the telephone. "And make it snappy."

Petrella grabbed his hat, and was out of Mrs. Catt's lodging-house and running down the street. He considered fetching his bicycle, but abandoned the idea. He would be quicker on his feet. A police car overtook him, and he jumped into it. "What's up?" he asked.

Sergeant Gwilliam, who was sitting beside the driver, said, "A lot of little hoodlums started roughing up the Church Hall, but they got a bit more'n they bargained for." Then to the driver, "Stop at the top of the street. We'll form up and go in together. Use your weight."

There were five of them including Petrella. Five men who keep together and know how to behave are a formidable force.

At one moment Petrella saw a milling crowd of youths, flailing arms, and dark bodies. The next, they had broken through, and were on the steps of the Church Hall. There had been no need to do anything. The sight of police reinforcements had had its usual effect and the crowd was shredding away.

The Reverend Philip Freebone, a stalwart young man, had been holding the doorway with a hockey stick. He had the beginnings of a black eye, his hair was on end, and there was a purely secular light in his eye.

"Glad you got here," he panted.

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"Who started it?" said Gwilliam.

"Young Corky—he and his friends."

Gwilliam said to Petrella, "Grab Corky."

Petrella knew Corky Williams of old. He looked for a light mop of blond, almost white hair; and saw it, in the dusk, under a lamp post.

Petrella ran. The remains of the crowd were melting fast, but he had to jump one prostrate body and push past two boys who were still quietly finishing off a private argument. For a moment he lost sight of Corky. Then he saw him and put on speed. Corky ran. Petrella ran. The chase lasted the length of two streets, and then Corky, seeing he was going to lose the race, slowed down and Petrella grabbed his arm.

"Come back and do some explaining."

"Sure, I'll come with you, Mr. Petrella," said Corky. He had the appearance of a lost waif and a voice that had melted harder hearts than Petrella's. "What do you want me for? It's nothing to do with me. I was just passing."

"Save it," said Petrella. "We'll hear what the parson has to say."

"You neeedn't hold my arm," said Corky. "I won't run away."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Petrella, and held him twice as tight.

Back at the Church Hall volunteers were clearing up the mess. Four boys were being guarded by a policeman in the changing-room, and Sergeant Gwilliam was being talked to by the Reverend Freebone.

"What that Corky wants," he said, "is the repeated application of a hard-heeled shoe to his bottom. He looks like a cherub, his mother spoils him, and if someone doesn't do something drastic, he's going to grow up into a gangster."

"I know his mother," said Sergeant Gwilliam shortly. "What happened tonight?"

"A week ago I threw young Corky out of the Club. For what seemed to me good reasons. I found he'd been using the recreation circle as cover for a pontoon school. And not even"—the reverend gentleman choked slightly—"an honest pontoon school. The cards were marked. And if a boy complained about his losses, he was intimidated by some of the older boys—you've got three or four of the worst of them in there. But they weren't the organizers. They did what they were told—by Corky."

"I see," said Gwilliam, "and tonight?"

"Tonight he turned up with

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his supporters and started shouting at the boys who were coming in to Club night. They didn't like it—but it wasn't until they threw a stone through the window that the trouble really started—"

"I can take it from there," said Gwilliam. "Who threw the stone? Was that Corky?"

"I don't think so. He kept very much in the background. But he was there all right. That head of hair's unmistakable."

"I'd better have a word with him," said Gwilliam.

A quarter of an hour later he returned. He looked frustrated.

"Either he's the most accomplished liar I've ever listened to—or we're all dreaming," he said. "You're sure he was here, when the trouble started, I mean?"

"Absolutely sure. Does he deny it?"

"He says that his mother sent him out on an errand—he's got all the times and details pat—that he came past the end of the road, heard a lot of noise and shouting, and stopped to see what it was all about."

"Let's see the other boys," suggested Petrella.

The four youths in the changing-room all said the same thing in suspicious unison. They'd been walking past the end of the road. (They hadn't taken the same trouble as Corky to construct an elaborate alibi, Petrella noticed.) They had heard a row. They had stopped to watch. It was nothing to do with them.

"Someone must have started it," suggested Gwilliam. "Did you happen to see anyone—throwing a stone, for instance?"

They had seen no one.

"You didn't happen to notice young Williams?"

They had none of them noticed Corky.

The police retired, baffled.

"Ask Corky," said Petrella, "why he ran away from me."

Corky was brought in. His blue eyes grew large as he understood the purport of the question. "*Me* run away?" he said. "Why, it just isn't true. I was walking away—I didn't want any part in it. I was two streets away when this other man came running after me. And grabbed me by the arm. He grabbed so hard it hurt."

Petrella could almost see the blue eyes filling with tears. He looked at Sergeant Gwilliam and shook his head.

The Sergeant drew a visible breath. "I'm charging you all," he said. "Breach of the Peace."

Petrella had early discovered that it was useless trying to set aside periods for study in his

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spare time. He had no spare time. Three times in his nominal rest hours he had retired to his lodgings with his textbooks and three times he had been snatched from them by the calls of duty. Now he kept the books in the C.I.D. room—a small room, up a flight of stairs at the back of Highside Police Station, which he shared with Sergeant Gwilliam—and studied when he could.

He was committing to memory that difficult table which starts: "Twenty-four grains one pennyweight, twenty pennyweight one ounce," when Haxtell looked in.

"This Williams case," he said. "It looks as if it's blowing up into something. They've asked for a remand so that they can brief Counsel. And the high-ups are getting worried and talking about bringing in a big gun themselves."

"It's that woman," said Gwilliam. There was no need to ask. They both knew whom he meant.

"They're building up a lovely case of persecution," said Haxtell. "Here's how it goes. Six months ago we charged Mrs. Williams with receiving property—one portable radio set—knowing the same to have been stolen. So did she, and so it had been. Only we weren't able to prove it. We knew it had been looted from the Sonning Town Goods Depot. Knowing isn't proving. She produced a receipt, from a radio shop, now defunct. And a neighbor, who swore blind she'd had that set for two years. And the Court gave her the benefit of the doubt."

"I see now, sir," said Petrella, "where Corky gets his eye for detail."

"They're both very high-class liars. Now, the story goes on, having failed to convict Mrs. Williams, we try and get at her by trumping up a story about her son. Sounds quite convincing too. I'd believe it myself if I didn't know it was all lies."

It was in the lunch hour on the following day that Mrs. Williams called to see Petrella. There was, in theory, nothing to prevent people visiting the C.I.D. room, but in fact this was the first occasion he could remember of an outsider penetrating to it. An apologetic constable put his head round the door, and said, "She had something very important to say—I thought I'd better bring her up."

"That's all right," said Petrella, pushing a work on Elementary Punctuation back into the drawer. "Show her in."

A sight of Mrs. Williams at close quarters showed where Corky had got his good looks

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from too. She must have been nearer 40 than 30, but she possessed those firm, regular, very slightly exaggerated lines of beauty which are so popular in saloon bars and on the music-hall stage. The strong suggestion of a flower garden in the month of August advanced with her into the room.

As Petrella studied her, she repaid him the compliment. She seemed surprised that he was so young.

"Please sit down," he said. "What can I do for you?"

Her surprise seemed to increase when he spoke. "You're educated, aren't you?" she said. "What are you doing in this crowd?"

"Earning my living."

"Must be better ways than this." Her glance comprehended the bare and dusty room, the worn linoleum, the shiny patches on Petrella's hard-worked elbows.

"I'm endeavoring to better myself," said Petrella seriously.

"So I heard. You're going for Sergeant, aren't you?" If Petrella was surprised he managed to conceal it. "That's one of the reasons I came to see you. You heard of Micky Malone?"

Petrella said nothing. Everyone had heard of Micky Malone, housebreaker extraordinary. And every policeman in North London would have given his belt and buttons for the chance of presenting a real, watertight, lawyerproof case against him.

"If you pulled him in—with the stuff on him—that would do you some good, wouldn't it?"

Petrella sat very still. He had been a policeman long enough to realize that just so had all great criminals been caught. By some woman like Mrs. Williams coming quietly to a C.I.D. room and speaking a few simple words. What sordid story of intrigue and violence, of passion and treachery, lay behind those words was often not known.

"If you've any information about Malone," he said, "I'd be glad to hear it."

"So you shall," said Mrs. Williams, crossing one shapely leg over the other. "When the charge against my son is dismissed."

"I'm not the magistrate."

"Now don't you come that sort of stuff with me. I've talked to the boy and I know just where he stands. There's only one thing against him. That he ran away when he saw you coming. All you've got to do is take it back. Say you made a mistake. It was some other boy. He was walking away quietly, like he said."

"How can I say it when it isn't true?"

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"That's up to you," said Mrs. Williams. "It won't be the first lie the police have told. What about it? Do we have a deal?"

If Petrella hesitated, it was nothing to do with his decision. He had come to that minutes earlier. It was just that there were certain angles which still puzzled him. At last he said, almost absent-mindedly, "No, of course I can't make any bargain with you. Now if that's all—"

Mrs. Williams was on her feet and she suddenly looked ten years older and a great deal uglier. "I'm warning you," she said. "You're young. You don't understand how things go. I've got friends."

"Mind the step," said Petrella.

"Certainly she's got friends," said Gwilliam, when Petrella told him about it. "And that perishing little jack-in-office, Councillor Hayes, is one of them. He's had it in for the police ever since we didn't find out who did *his* house nine months ago. I wouldn't be surprised if he had pulled the job himself for the insurance money."

"I don't think Hayes is a crook," said Petrella. "Just a busybody. He's certainly got a bee in his bonnet about the police."

"As long as he keeps it in his bonnet and doesn't let it get out and sting us."

"I've just been reading a book on civics," said Petrella. "It points out that while, outside London, the police forces are under the control of the Borough Council or the County Council as the case may be, in London they are answerable only to the Home Secretary."

"And who's *he* answerable to?" said Gwilliam. "Parliament. And who are they answerable to? I'll tell you. Any nosey little busybody who chooses to make a fuss and get the Press moving."

Superintendent Barstow at Division was saying the same thing, but in different words, to Haxtell.

"This is one case we want to win," he said. "I hear the defense have got Marsham-Tallboys—you remember him? He's the man who gave the Chief Superintendent hell in the Warehouse case. We've briefed Tomlins in self-defense."

"What's all the fuss about?" said Haxtell uneasily.

"It's just one of those things," said Barstow. "If the boy gets off, people will believe we have been persecuting the Williams family. Councillor Hayes is bound to raise it for them. He's not a crook, but he's a susceptible old fool. And Mrs. Williams

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has got him round her little finger. The Press have been a bit restive lately, and this'll be a Roman holiday for them."

Haxtell didn't inquire who would play the role of early Christian martyr. He knew.

"There's more to it than that," said Barstow. "I'm told there's a sort of pressure group gunning for the Home Secretary. And criticism of the police is the best ammunition they can have."

"Do you think we ought to drop the case, sir?"

Superintendent Barstow slowly turned a dusky red. "Certainly I don't!" he said. "What you've got to do is *win* it."

Unconscious of the clouds of almost political magnitude which were banking in the west, Petrella made his way quietly home that evening to his lodgings. His path took him through Barnaby Passage, and in the darkest part of the passage two figures came out to meet him. His heart gave a jump, then steadied again.

They were only boys; as he now saw, two of the Harrington children, Ron, the ten-year-old, and a smaller one whose name he had forgotten. Ron seemed to have something he wanted to say, but as he spoke in a disjointed and breathless whisper, it took quite a long time for him to get it across.

When at last he had made his meaning clear, Petrella was filled with a deep and unholy joy. "Are you absolutely sure?" he said.

"'Course I'm sure," said Ron. "Hazel's got a friend whose sister chars for Missus Williams. She saw it. She didn't like to say nothing, see. But it's there all right. On a little plate inside the back of the clock. That's why Ma Williams never seen it."

"Ron," said Petrella, "next time I'm by here I'm going to bring you the biggest box of sweets that money can buy."

"'S all right," said Ron. "Corky, he won my money, by cheating, see. That's why we thought we'd tell you. We don't want any sweets."

"You shall have 'em all the same," said Petrella.

The case of the Police versus Williams (and others) was one of the most remarkable ever heard in Helenwood Magistrates' Court. And its crises were none the less real for not being apparent on the surface.

The presiding magistrate, Mr. Benkall, was not what is popularly called a "policeman's magistrate." He decided cases on the evidence produced and in the light of his own rugged

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common sense. But even he could not be unaware of the implications of the case he was hearing; of the crowds round the door, of the packed public benches, of eminent Counsel in their places, and of a press box, usually occupied by one elderly reporter from the *Highside Mercury,* that was now bulging with representatives of the National Press.

It took an hour to clear the routine matters and the case was called just before midday.

By four o'clock in the afternoon it was apparent that the police were winning. The insidious Mr. Marsham-Tallboys had done his best with Mrs. Williams and his worst with the police, but on the whole it seemed probable that the evidence of one clergyman, six boys, one detective sergeant, and one detective constable was going to be preferred to that of a mother, however sympathetically represented.

It was time for the defense to call up its reserves. At four o'clock Mr. Councillor Hayes entered the box. He appeared as a witness to character and told the magistrate that he had always found Williams a cheerful, honest, and truthful boy, of very good family. He knew his mother well. A widow and a very worthy citizen. The family was a credit to Highside. He could not for a moment believe that a boy from such an excellent family would do the things imputed to him.

When Mr. Tomlins rose to cross-examine, he seemed for a moment to have forgotten what he wanted to ask. He was an amiable teddy bear of a man, with the untidiest wig at the Old Bailey, and his kindliness and apparent vagueness had been deceiving criminals, to their undoing, for the past 25 years. He said at last, apologetically, "I'm afraid I missed your names, Mr. Hayes. Your Christian names, I mean. Could you repeat them?"

Mr. Hayes, surprised, said, "Roderick Winstanley," in the strangled tones of a man unexpectedly asked to repeat his Christian names in public.

Mr. Tomlins repeated, "Roderick Winstanley Hayes," in a dreamy voice and made a careful note on the margin of his brief. "You have, I believe, always been interested in local government topics?"

"That is so."

"Am I right in saying that you gave a series of lectures on them some years ago to the Institute of Civic Studies?"

"That is correct."

"In fact, I believe, so appreciative were your students that they presented you, at the end of the course, with a hand-

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some walnut clock, with a small plate inside the back, as a token of their appreciation?"

"I—yes, that is so."

"And this was one of the articles stolen from your house some nine months ago and never recovered?"

"The police," said Mr. Hayes with heavy sarcasm, and a glance at the Press, "have not succeeded in restoring it to me—yet."

"Really, Mr. Tomlins," said the magistrate. "Wide though the latitude is that is permitted to Counsel in this Court, I fail to see—"

He was interrupted. Mrs. Williams was observed to be on her feet and fighting her way through the crowd toward the exit. The face that she turned over her shoulder as she reached the door was white.

"I was only going to ask the witness," said Mr. Tomlins gently, "whether he was aware that the clock is at this very moment to be found on Mrs. Williams' drawing-room mantelpiece."

"How *very* satisfactory," said Superintendent Barstow. "How really very satisfactory." He ticked the points of satisfaction off on his fingers. "First, of course, that we won the case. I notice that has killed the news story dead. Secondly, that old Hayes should have made a perfect fool of himself in public—giving evidence about that woman's respectability when all the time she'd got a clock *stolen from him* on her drawing-room mantelpiece. Thirdly, that clock's going to be a very useful bit of evidence when we go against Mrs. Williams for receiving. Stolen within the last twelve months, section 43 of the Larceny Act—I needn't tell you—and if she doesn't go down this time, what with all the rest of the stuff we found in her cellar, I'm a Dutchman. And fourthly. . ."

His finger waggled. There was, he knew, a fourth cause for satisfaction. "Oh, yes. Petrella's promotion has come through. He's a Sergeant now. Probationary, of course."

"Q"

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It was getting harder and harder to find a new money-making idea . . .

A DEAL IN DIAMONDS

by R. L. STEVENS

It was seeing a girl toss a penny into the plaza fountain that gave Pete Hopkins the idea. He was always on the lookout for money-making ideas, and they were getting tougher to find all the time. But as he looked up from the fountain to the open window of the Downtown Diamond Exchange, he thought he had found a good one at last.

He strolled over to the phone booth at the other side of the plaza and called Johnny Stoop. Johnny was the classiest dude Pete knew—a real fashion-plate who could walk into a store and have the clerks falling over themselves to wait on him. Better yet, he had no record here in the east. And it was doubtful if the cops could link him to the long list of felonies he had committed ten years ago in California.

"Johnny? This is Pete. Glad I caught you in."

"I'm always in during the daytime, Pete boy. In fact, I was just getting up."

"I got a job for us, Johnny, if you're interested."

"What sort?"

"Meet me at the Birchbark Bar and we'll talk about it."

"How soon?"

"An hour?"

Johnny Stoop groaned. "Make it two. I gotta shower and eat breakfast."

"Okay, two. See you."

The Birchbark Bar was a quiet place in the afternoons—perfect for the sort of meeting Pete wanted. He took a booth near the back and ordered a beer. Johnny was only ten minutes late and he walked into the place as if he were casing it for a robbery or a girl he might pick up. Finally he settled, almost reluctantly, for Pete's booth.

"So what's the story?"

The bartender was on the phone yelling at somebody about a delivery, and the rest of the place was empty. Pete started talking. "The Downtown Diamond Exchange. I

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think we can rip it off for a quick handful of stones. Might be good for fifty grand."

Johnny Stoop grunted, obviously interested. "How do we do it?"

"*You* do it. I wait outside."

"Great! And I'm the one the cops grab!"

"The cops don't grab anyone. You stroll in, just like Dapper Dan, and ask to see a tray of diamonds. You know where the place is, on the fourth floor. Go at noon, when there's always a few customers around. I'll create a commotion in the hall, and you snatch up a handful of stones."

"What do I do—swallow them like the gypsy kids used to do?"

"Nothing so crude. The cops are wise to that, anyway. You throw them out the window."

"Like hell I do!"

"I'm serious, Johnny."

"They don't even keep their windows open. They got air conditioning, haven't they?"

"I saw the window open today. You know all this energy-conservation stuff—turn off the air conditioner and open the windows. Well, they're doing it. They probably figure four flights up nobody's goin' to get in that way. But something can get *out*—the diamonds."

"It sounds crazy, Pete."

"Listen, you toss the diamonds through the window from the counter. That's maybe ten feet away." He was making a quick pencil sketch of the office as he talked. "See, the window's behind the counter and you're in front of it. They never suspect that you threw 'em out the window because you're never near the window. They search you, they question you, but then they gotta let you go. There are other people in the store, other suspects. And nobody saw you take them."

"So the diamonds go out the window. But you're not outside to catch them. You're in the hall creating a diversion. So what happens to the stones?"

"This is the clever part. Directly beneath the window, four stories down, is the fountain in the plaza. It's big enough so the diamonds can't miss it. They fall into the fountain and they're as safe as in a bank vault, till we decide to get them. Nobody noticed them hit the water because the fountain is splashing. And nobody sees them *in* the water because they're clear. They're like glass."

"Yeah," Johnny agreed. "Unless the sun—"

"The sun don't reach the bottom of the pool. You could look right at 'em and not notice 'em—unless you knew they were there. We'll know, and we'll come back for them to-

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morrow night, or the next."

Johnny was nodding. "I'm in. When do we pull it off?"

Pete smiled and raised his glass of beer. "Tomorrow."

On the following day Johnny Stoop entered the fourth floor offices of the Downtown Diamond Exchange at exactly 12:15. The uniformed guard who was always at the door gave him no more than a passing glance. Pete watched it all from the busy hallway outside, getting a clear view through the thick glass doors that ran from floor to ceiling.

As soon as he saw the clerk produce a tray of diamonds for Johnny he glanced across the office at the window. It was open about halfway, as it had been the previous day. Pete started walking toward the door, touched the thick glass handle, and fell over in an apparent faint. The guard inside the door heard him fall and came out to offer assistance.

"What's the matter, mister? You okay?"

"I—I can't—breathe . . ."

He raised his head and asked for a glass of water. Already one of the clerks had come around the counter to see what the trouble was.

Pete sat up and drank the water, putting on a good act. "I just fainted, I guess."

"Let me get you a chair," one clerk said.

"No, I think I'd better just go home." He brushed off his suit and thanked them. "I'll be back when I'm feeling better." He hadn't dared to look at Johnny, and he hoped the diamonds had gone out the window as planned.

He took the elevator downstairs and strolled across the plaza to the fountain. There was always a crowd around it at noon—secretaries eating their lunches out of brown-paper bags, young men casually chatting with them. He mingled unnoticed and worked his way to the edge of the pool. But it was a big area, and through the rippling water he couldn't be certain he saw anything except the scattering of pennies and nickels at the bottom. Well, he hadn't expected to see the diamonds anyway, so he wasn't disappointed.

He waited an hour, then decided the police must still be questioning Johnny. The best thing to do was to head for his apartment and wait for a call.

It came two hours later.

"That was a close one," Johnny said. "They finally let me go, but they still might be following me."

"Did you do it?"

"Sure I did it! What do you think they held me for? They

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were goin' crazy in there. But I can't talk now. Let's meet at the Birchbark in an hour. I'll make sure I'm not followed."

Pete took the same booth at the rear of the Birchbark and ordered his usual beer. When Johnny arrived the dapper man was smiling. "I think we pulled it off, Pete. Damn if we didn't pull it off!"

"What'd you tell them?"

"That I didn't see a thing. Sure, I'd asked for the tray of stones, but then when there was the commotion in the hall I went to see what it was along with everyone else. There were four customers in the place and they couldn't really pin it on any one of us. But they searched us all, and even took us downtown to be x-rayed, to be certain we hadn't swallowed the stones."

"I was wondering what took you so long."

"I was lucky to be out as soon as I was. A couple of the others acted more suspicious than me, and that was a break. One of them even had an arrest record for a stolen car." He said it in a superior manner. "The dumb cops figure anyone who stole a car would steal diamonds."

"I hope they didn't get too good a look at me. I'm the one who caused the commotion, and they just gotta figure I'm involved."

"Don't worry. We'll pick up the diamonds tonight and get out of town for a while."

"How many stones were there?" Pete asked expectantly.

"Five. And all beauties."

The evening papers confirmed it. They placed the value of the five missing diamonds at $65,000. And the police had no clue.

They went back to the plaza around midnight, but Pete didn't like the feel of it. "They might be wise," he told Johnny. "Let's wait a night, in case the cops are still snoopin' around up there. Hell, the stones are safe where they are."

The following night, when the story had already disappeared from the papers, replaced by a bank robbery, they returned to the plaza once more. This time they waited till three A.M., when even the late crowd from the bars had scattered for home. Johnny carried a flashlight and Pete wore wading boots. He'd already considered the possibility that one or two of the diamonds might not be found, but even so they'd be far ahead of the game.

The fountain was turned off at night, and the calmness of the water made the search easier. Wading in the shallow water, Pete found two of the gems almost at once. It took another ten minutes to find the

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third one, and he was ready to quit then. "Let's take what we got, Johnny."

The flashlight bobbed. "No, no. Keep looking. Find us at least one more."

Suddenly they were pinned in the glare of a spotlight, and a voice shouted, "Hold it right there! We're police officers!"

"Damn!" Johnny dropped the flashlight and started to run, but already the two cops were out of their squad car. One of them pulled his gun and Johnny stopped in his tracks. Pete climbed from the pool and stood with his hands up.

"You got us, officer," he said.

"Damn right we got you," the cop with the gun growled. "The coins in that fountain go to charity every month. Anybody that would steal them has to be pretty low. I hope the judge gives you both ninety days in the cooler. Now up against the car while we search you!"

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Maling, Arthur	BENT MAN	Harper & Row	6.95	6/18
McMullen, Mary	A COUNTRY KIND OF DEATH	Doubleday & Co.	5.95	6/6

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a *NEW* Chick schtick by

S. S. RAFFERTY

Clap hands, here comes Kelly! Chick the Dick, the ferreting funnyman who talks like a glossary of slang, takes a date to a Park Avenue bash and then, to rescue a doll in distress, Chick does his thing—detection without tears (to paraphrase the late Will Cuppy), or as showbiz might put it, gumshoeing with comic relief . . . Live and let live, Chick!

PLAY IT COOL, CHICK!

by S. S. RAFFERTY

I usually avoid Tish Loman's parties. Mostly I avoid them because her guests are something out of a 1920's social comedy that closed on opening night. The guys always give you a shake with the left hand ta-ta fashion, and the women sound like their voice boxes were relined with miniature bourbon-barrel staves.

But I really can't avoid Tish forever, because she steers a lot of her society friends to my little night club on Third Avenue. Translate "society" to "money," and you know why I say, "Yes, ma'am," when she asks me to one of her bashes for the 485th time.

The acceptance was my first mistake in an evening filled with them. My second booboo was waltzing into her duplex pad with Jimmy Silvers on my right wing. Lest you be confused, Jimmy does not use the Men's Room. It's the latest fad for ladies of the musical theater to have men's front names. We've got Bobbies, Georgies, Sammies, and, so help me, one dumb broad who calls herself Winston.

When we were handing the butler our coats, Tish comes floating into the foyer all ready to play hostess-lady, but when she spots the Belle of Broadway, her greeting to me, "Chick dahling, how nice of you to come to my little potty," comes out like frozen custard.

I introduce Jimmy and find

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myself in a No Man's Land between icy daggers. This action I don't understand. It is common knowledge that I don't practice celibacy, and although Tish and I have had a few tender moments there has been no mutual consent to permanent pattycake.

Tish smiles like a cat in a house with five canaries missing and fires the first salvo. "How charmingly unique. 'Jimmy Silvers.' Did you make it up yourself, dear?"

After two or three road-company musicals Miss Silvers is no slouch at dodging curve balls. She not only dodges 'em, she throws 'em back with a little spit on 'em.

"No, it's short for 'Jameson.' What does Tish stand for? I always think little girl's names are so attractive on older women."

There you have it, folks. Welcome to World War III right here in Penthouse 29B on li'l ol' Park Avenue. So I start making like a UN Peace Mission and guide Jimmy over to the bar at the end of the living room. The room isn't too crowded for a Loman Luau. I recognized a few of them.

Larry Osgood, TV anchorman, was squiring a meek little thing who looked like she wrote lightweight poetry. Olga Lewis, who writes one-act plays that no one understands, had a pretty boy on a leash. And Croaton Wilkes III, drunk as usual, was slobbering over a bored-looking blonde who looked like she had sense enough to stay home. Out of the ten guests or so the one that really surprised me was Dexter Loman, Tish's ex-husband.

Dex is my idol. He's the only guy I ever met who came through a divorce not only in one piece but with no alimony, yet. And to sweeten the pot Tish still picks up his bills. They ought to erect a shrine to the guy. It could be a Loser's Lourdes, a place where the rest of us could find a moment of solace once a month before we write the check, or checks, depending on how many times you've put faith over experience.

Jimmy went to the powder room and I ordered the drinks from the barman. His name is Rocky. He knows me because he has worked my joint as a relief man when one of my own guys is hiding from a bookie.

"Hey, Mr. Kelly," he says, playing society barkeep—he calls me Chick at my place. "VTNL for you. What's for the lady?"

"Tequila and lime juice."

"Lime juice I got. Tequila I ain't. How about rum?"

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"Are you having a problem, Chick?" Tish says, coming alongside and tying up to my arm.

"We ain't got no tequila, Mrs. Loman."

"If that's what Chicky wants, that's what baby gets."

Now that was Mistake Number Three, because if she finds out the cactus juice is for Jimmy and not for me she's going to blow her mind. Mistake Number Four is when she goes over to poor Dexter, whispers something to him, and he gives me two fish eyes and leaves the apartment. Tish Loman could have called any liquor store in the city and had them deliver the tequila on a satin pillow, but she sends Dexter boy for it.

I was standing there looking dumb when someone said, "What's a VTNL?" I turned to find Croaton Wilkes III's blonde behind me.

"Vodka and tonic, no lime," I said. "Citrus growers dislike me."

"It seems Tish Loman doesn't."

"I could give you the 'I'm my own man' speech, but I don't feel very philosophical at the moment. Besides, Tish is frosting me because I brought a girl along."

"That's some girl. I heard the little scene in the foyer. But you look as if you've had some experience as a man in the middle. You're Chick Kelly, aren't you?"

I gave her a George Sanders bow. "I don't believe I have the advantage, milady."

"Barbara Warden. That's a big girl's name. I think I'll toy with a VTNL if you don't hold an exclusive franchise."

This is some flip fox, I'm telling myself. In a paradoxical way she knew how to combine softness and flint, without letting either one get out of hand. I liked Barbara Warden.

"Are you a sociologist or something?" I asked her.

"I work for the Wilkes Foundation."

"That's pretty good work. Is Croaton Wilkes the Third your guy?"

"In absentia at the moment. I think our gracious hostess has ideas of her own. Who can say nay to a merger of millions?"

"Barbara Warden, the poor are always with us."

"Croaton certainly isn't a fan of yours. Jimmy Silvers is an old friend of his, Chick. So now you have two people who don't like you too much."

"Tish and the third?"

"Okay, then, three. Tish, Croaton, and me. Of all the places to show up with that damned woman."

So that was the chink in her

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Maidenform long-line. I might as well have showed up with Typhoid Mary. The fact of it is, I don't know Jimmy Silvers that well. I met her about four weeks ago at a backstage party. To me she was fluff, but it was beginning to look like she was an annoying piece of lint on a few other lives.

"You know, Barbara, I hardly know the lady," I said, giving her a smile I borrowed from Ray Milland.

"Kelly, the only way you ever know a lady is suprajacent. Go look it up."

She was moving away from the bar because Jimmy was coming back from the longest toilette in history. She also had the longest face in creation.

"Boy, you're beautiful, Chick, really beautiful," she snarled at me. "Of all the flaming bloody places to drag me. Where's my drink?"

"They had to send out for it. Look, you want to split? I didn't know you had wires in here."

"Leave? Nuts. I wouldn't give the slob the satisfaction. If he wants to drag that chestless wonder around town, I'm not insulted."

I thought for a moment she was talking about Barbara, but she didn't qualify physically.

"You're talking about the little girl with Larry Osgood?"

"Beautiful, beautiful. Flaming beautiful. 'Little girl.' The only thing little about that ingenue is her brain." Then Jimmy goes into an audition for Baby Snooks. "Doo-pee-doo-pee-doo, me just love big strong TV personalities, doo-pee-doo-pee-doo."

I took her by the arm macho-like and said, "Look, Jimmy, you sound a little snockered. Do you have any booze in your purse, or maybe uppers?"

She took my face in her hands and gave me a juicy labial smacker. "Chick the cluck. You're so bloody charming. I could tell you little secrets about this flaming crowd that would sear your ears. Excuse me, baby, but I want to talk to Olga Lewis' puppy."

I can see right away I'm in the wrong place with the wrong broad, and I'm ready to bail out alone when Tish comes on like someone just announced "surf's up" and she's wearing a backless halter that didn't cover much up front either.

"If you're going to do a slow strip for us, Tish," I said, "I suggest a bikini for the next costume change."

"Rocky, make me a bullet, straight up." She sat on one of the stools and smoothed her skirt. "Your date should learn that the hostess is the one who wears the hostess pajamas. *I*

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wear them at my parties, not at someone else's—and *never* the same color. Tell me a joke, dahling."

"I guess I brought one with me. Sorry, Tish, I didn't know I was supposed to do a single when you asked me."

"Sweetie, don't be a goose. You're a big boy." She might as well have patted my head as she got up. I watched her as she walked away and decided Tish had one hell of a beautiful set of shoulders. I turned to the bar and found Rocky was enjoying the same scenery. He gave me a leer and said, sub rosa style, "Gee, Chick, how did ya ever get mixed up with this bunch?"

"Business, Rocky. You work many of Loman's parties?"

"Hey man, thanks to you, I've got an exclusive yet. I guess you showed up with bad news."

"I've just been told I'm not observant. What's the scam on this crowd?"

"You know what you see, kid. The boss lady is okay. The broad you brung is poison, and so's the other one, Miss Warden. The guy with the number after his name—"

"Croaton Wilkes?"

"Yeah, Wilkes. He had a hell of a fight with the Warden dame the last bash we had."

"What's with the pretty boy and the doggy dame?"

"I think he wears open-toed sandals, if you know what I mean, Chick."

So who needs this action? I'm thinking of making the escape scene when Olga Lewis walks up and says, "Excuse me, where is the bathroom?"

"This is my debutante debut," I tell her, not too strongly, because the lady looks green. I give Tish the eye and she comes over with a "Dahling, let me help you" and leads Olga off to the water and tiles. Jimmy is still talking with the pretty boy, which might have made his keeper ill. Then I get Mistake Number Five. Dexter Loman slams up to the bar and smacks down a brown paper bag containing a bottle of tequila.

"I hope you're satisfied, Kelly," he says to me. "Here's your booze. Thanks for turning me into an errand boy, chum."

"You get what you give, poochie," I said, and he started to clench his fists and I was hoping he would toss one, but he didn't. Guys with front handles like Dexter seldom do.

"You get pleasure rubbing someone's nose in it, don't you, Kelly?"

"I think there is a French phrase for what I could say, but let's forget it, Dexter. I don't even know your beef."

"You know damn well what

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the beef is. You have big ideas about Tish, don't you?"

"Whoa up," I said, taking him by the elbow firmly. "You work your own schtik, bubby, but don't deal me a hand. Tish is a good friend, nothing more."

"You got problems, Chick?" Rocky asks, getting into the act.

"Sure, even here you have your gunsels," Dexter said, raising his voice.

"Dexter"—I put more pressure on his arm. "Don't give me a ton of sand, because my gears can't take it. I'm a little sick of charades, so good night."

Normally I play the gentleman, but I didn't see Jimmy anywhere, so I did the fade, getting my topcoat myself from the foyer closet. I was punching the DOWN button on the elevator panel and steaming when I sensed someone behind me.

It was Larry Osgood's junior miss looking at me with spaniel eyes. She was nervous and shy, or seemed to be.

"Did you press DOWN?" Jimmy was right, she had a doo-pee-doo quality to her voice.

"There's only one way out of a penthouse, my dear, and that's down."

"Oh!" She put on a frown to think about it, and then, getting the point, smiled. "You know, I can never figure elevators out. Do you press UP because you want it to come up, or do you press DOWN because you want to go down?"

"That's ponderous. I'll bring it up at my next metaphysics class."

"Do you teach? I think teaching is a very rewarding endeavor."

In the poker game of life this cookie is playing with four cards, but maybe the dumb bit is only an act.

"We weren't introduced in there," she doo-pee-doos. "I'm Ashley Wilkes."

That did it. She was playing with three cards, and none matched.

"Well, ma'am, you can jes' call me Rhett."

"That's not very original. I hear that all the time. My brother would have been Ashley, but my mother hadn't seen *Gone with the Wind* when he was born. When I came along, she had, and couldn't resist. Your name really isn't Rhett, is it?"

"Chick Kelly. Nice to know you, Ashley Wilkes," I said, putting out my hand. She might not have a number after her name, like her brother Croaton, but I'll bet she had lots of numbers after her name at Chase Manhattan. I have an abiding respect for the rich. She shook hands and then just

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stared at the elevator doors.

"They must run this place by hand winch," I said to her, but it didn't get a smile. "That's the problem in these older buildings along Park. They are run by an operator. If he's not around, you wait. Can I drop you somewhere?"

She didn't answer me because just then the elevator doors opened and two uniformed cops stepped out.

"Excuse me, folks, but I'll have to ask you to step back into the apartment. There seems to have been an accident."

"What accident?" I asked him.

"Some lady jumped or fell off a terrace in this building five minutes ago. The elevator boy says he brought her up to the penthouse earlier this evening."

About ten minutes later, when Lieutenant Jaffee of Homicide showed up, I could see that the cops weren't buying the "fell or jumped" theory. With Jaffee on the scene I could tell that he thought someone had given Jimmy Silvers flying lessons and she had flunked out. I asked Rocky to pour me another vodka, double, no lime, no tonic. I was going to get all the fizz I'd ever need from Jaffee.

Lieutenant Donald Jaffee is no stranger to me. I know every curve of his bald bullet head and what goes on inside it as well. He's been trying to introduce me to the management of the stone hotel in Ossining for years, and I can tell from the look on his face that he has already made the reservation.

"Sit down, Kelly," he says to me when I get called into Tish's den, which he is using as an inquisition chamber. "Was this young lady drunk tonight when you brought her here?"

My first reaction to a Jaffee question is to play with it like a bubble and then burst it, but this is not a usual Jaffee question. Normally he'd ask me why I did it and bring out the thumb screws. I decided to be nice.

"No, but she was agitated. She might have been on uppers. A lot of the girls use them to keep going after doing a show."

"When you were out on the terrace earlier in the evening, did you notice any loose brickwork along the balcony?"

Now, folks, let me give you a short lesson on answering a cop's questions: don't. This little bomb is a trick. Jaffee would put a rattlesnake in your pocket and then ask you for a match. He tosses this loose brickwork jazz at me because he wants me to think he's convinced Jimmy's death was accidental. Then he thinks I will

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say yes, I saw the loose bricks because that will clinch the accident theory. Baloney, bubby, he just wants to place me on that terrace by my own admission. I'll lay you ten to one there are no loose bricks.

"I wasn't on the terrace because I didn't know there was a terrace."

"No terrace in a penthouse? Come on, Kelly. Have you ever been here before?"

"Nope. You know, Jaffee, of all the suspects in this place I'm about the weakest. If I had told Jimmy where we were going tonight, she might have refused to come, because she seems to know several people here who either disliked her or hated her."

"There seem to be a few people who like you—like Tish Loman."

"I hope you never take up screen writing, because you'd put the country to sleep. Tish Loman is a friend, but I doubt she introduced Jimmy to the Park Avenue pavement in a fit of jealousy. But if you're working on jealousy, you might try a dame named Barbara Warden. I think Jimmy was aceing her out of the Wilkes fortune. Or maybe Olga Lewis has a gripe or two."

"You're pretty good on spreading the guilt around, Kelly. This bartender, Rocky Provone, he works at your place, doesn't he?"

"He works off the Union Relief Board when one of my guys is out. I call in and they send the next guy in line. Sometimes it's Rocky. But you know, Lieutenant, that reminds me, I was at the bar all the time I was here, and Rocky can verify that."

"Some alibi witness! One of your own employees. Besides, he says he went into the kitchen for ice just before you left the bar. He didn't see you leave. But then, no one saw him in the kitchen, either, so maybe he was on the terrace doing a little job for his boss. Dexter Loman says Provone threatened him when Dexter was having words with you."

"Dexter Loman is a gold-plated twit, and I wouldn't need Rocky to handle him. But if you won't buy Rocky, how about Ashley Wilkes? She followed me out of the apartment and was waiting for the elevator with me."

There is a small scar on Jaffee's left cheek, and when he smiles in a certain way it tilts up. I've seen it before. It's a sardonic signal that says, "I'm closing in on you."

"Look, Kelly, I think we can drop all this witness stuff. It took two seconds to push Jimmy Silvers over the ledge.

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Anyone could have done it. But you brought her here and then left without her."

"So I'm not a gentleman."

"That goes without saying, funny man. You can join the others outside. Have Miss Wilkes step in here, will you?"

Ashley's complexion matched her monicker when I told her Jaffee wanted her.

"Don't let him bully you, Ashley. He can't mix you up in this."

The pupils of her eyes contracted like a junkie's, only her reaction was from fear, not from narcotics. "They'll find out. I know they'll find out," she said in a whisper.

"Find out what, kid?"

"My brother got involved with her last month. I knew it would break Mother's heart if she found out Croaton was running around with a stripper."

"She wasn't a stripper, Ashley, she was in a musical."

"She *was* two years ago. I had her investigated. And that's not the worst of it. The investigator's report said 'party films,' but I know what that means."

Boy, can Kid Kelly pick 'em! I'm some judge of character. "All right, Ashley, so you might have had a grudge, but don't broadcast it. What the cops don't know won't hurt you."

"They'll find the check, so what's the use?"

"You gave Jimmy a check? A personal check?"

"For three thousand dollars, but she never cashed it. I was going to ask her why when she came in tonight, but I didn't want Croaton to get suspicious. He thinks she dropped him for another man. I thought I had a chance to ask her when I saw her go out on the balcony, but Olga Lewis was with her, so I decided to leave."

"Why didn't Osgood leave with you?"

"Because I didn't come with him. He's a bore anyway, both on and off TV."

"Look, you keep talking like that and you're going to find yourself talking to a judge. Just clam up. The cops can write this off as an accident if they don't have information like you're peddling."

Just then Jaffee's dome pokes out of the door. "I see you are real conscientious about delivering messages, Kelly."

"Well, I have to get my Western Union cap and puttees on first. Miss Wilkes, the Lieutenant would like to see you in the den. Maybe I should have sung it. You didn't specify that in your order, sir."

Jaffee gives me a sneer and goes back into the room. Just before she turned to follow him

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I winked at Ashley. "Play it cool, kid," I said to her.

Although the party had turned into a wake, you would never have known it. Rocky was still doing heavy business at the bar and everyone was sitting around chatting light talk.

Larry Osgood is at the bar complaining because the cops won't let him phone in the story.

"I don't think a body landing on Park Avenue will remain a scoop for long," I told him.

"Say, I'd love to bring a camera crew in here." His eyes were gleaming as he said it. "What a segment! We could pan out to the terrace, then dolly in slowly on the base of the ledge. Terrific, huh? Then we pan up the ledge wall to the top, between the flower pots, do a hold shot down to the street just for a second or two, then we zoom right down to the pavement. With the right musical background it would knock the audience cold."

"Hell, Osgood," I said, taking a fresh drink from Rocky, "why not really do it up brown and have the morgue ship the body back here? We can toss it off again for all of America to see. Better yet, if Tish was any kind of a hostess, she would double in the part and take the dive herself."

"You know, Kelly, if I didn't know you were a professional comedian I'd say you were being damned nasty."

"It's one of the hazards of the trade. I get reckless when I do my act, but I own the joint, so I can toss 'em out. Like people can turn off your program."

"I guess I owe you an apology. After all, she was your girl friend."

Ashley was right. Larry Osgood was a bore.

"Gee, Chick," Rocky says to me, "this is some kind of a mess. The bull with the skin skull asked me if I saw you on the terrace, and I dummied up."

"Some dummy up. Some cop-out, your going to the kitchen for ice."

"That was before I went. I saw you through the window when I was making a drink for the Lewis dame's puppy."

"You must be nipping back there, pal, because I was never on the terrace. I was looking for my coat in the foyer closet."

"Sure, Chick." He winked at me. "And that's the way it's going to be."

"I'm not jiving you, Rocky. That's where I was. Did you see someone on the terrace?"

"Chick, I thought it was you. It was someone in a monkey suit."

"Every guy in the room has a tux on, Rocky."

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"Hey, you're right! I guess I thought it was you because the broad you brung went out there a few seconds before you left the bar here. Man, I didn't tell the cop nothing, so help me. Can I get you anything, Mrs. Loman?"

Tish slumped down on a barstool looking haggard. "Ice water, please," she said. "Chick, you are a real bum to do this to me, really."

Isn't that the nth degree in womanhood? Here a woman is dead, possibly murdered, and Little Miss Rich Bitch considers it an inconvenience. If I ever get out of here with a whole skin I'm going to confine myself exclusively to girls who make forty bucks a week.

"You're right, Tish. I should have taken her to the Empire State Building. If she had jumped from there, nobody would have been embarrassed."

"Jump, my foot. You don't believe that."

"You have some ideas, Tish?"

"Not me, my friend. I want no part of it. But girls like that don't jump or fall off buildings. I sort of thought you and Larry wouldn't hit it off. He tells me you've been nasty."

"It's part of my charm. Do you know if my date had a thing for him?"

She gave me a who-cares shrug.

"Tish, when Olga Lewis turned green, where did you take her?"

"I showed her to one of the guest johns."

"Then where did you go?"

Her eyes went squinty. "Chick, in plain language, you're an SOB. If you think I had anything to do with that burlesque queen's death—"

"How did you know she was a stripper, baby?"

That got to her gut fast, but she is tough in the clinches.

"Give me a stinger, Rocky," she says, sucking in air. "It's common knowledge, isn't it? I don't like being third-degreed, dahling."

"There's a bald-headed cop in your den who can be tougher, honeybunch."

I guess she got tired of the body blows, so dodging and weaving was in order. She reached over and caressed my arm.

"Chick, dear, you know you mean more to me than just friendship. When this thing gets cleared up, let's fly down to my place in Bal Harbour. You'd look super with a tan."

"They don't make collars big enough or leases short enough, Tish. Right now there is a little girl type who is probably knotting her own noose with Jaffee. I don't like the idea of it. Now spill, Tish, or I'm going to start

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blowing whistles. How did you know that Jimmy Silvers had been a stripper?"

She took a long dip into the stinger. "Larry told me. He knew her when he was with a small station in Texas. Honestly, that's all I know. And I mean that about Bal Harbour."

"Take Dexter, he needs the work. When did Osgood pour out his Texas soul to you?"

"Tonight, when you walked in with that tramp. And if you're concerned about Dex, don't be. You really didn't see anything in that girl, did you? Even if you did, dahling, we all have pasts."

After five husbands, a couple of co-respondent suits, and a scandal or three it would be safe to say Tish Loman had a past. But I wasn't thinking of her past at the moment.

"Pasts are beginning to intrigue me. Tish, which is the best phone extension to use if you don't want the cops to know about it?"

"There's my own private line in my bedroom. Didn't I give you that number?"

"You can give me the use of it for now. Go ask the cop in uniform something while I slip out of the room. Make sure he doesn't take his eyes off you."

And I was right. When Tish walked up to him, he had eyes for nothing else.

I beat it through the apartment and found Tish's bedroom. It was as big as a basketball court, and all pink and blue.

I dialed Information and got Bob Diamond's number. Bob is a press agent who specializes in pushing Broadway shows. He had Jimmy's show as an account. When I gave him the bad news about Jimmy, he thanked me for giving it to him first.

"Favor for favor, Bob. What do you know about Jimmy's past? Was she ever a stripper?"

"Stripper? Man, she was a walking iceberg. You couldn't get her to take her clothes off if they were on fire. Who told you that?"

"Do you have a legit bio on her?"

"Chicko, are you implying that I make up bios?"

"Like the Brothers Grimm could match you. Seriously, did she ever work in Texas, or have any skin-flick work?"

"Man, someone has been doing a number on the lady's rep! Straight arrow, Chick, Jimmy was kind of a stinker, but she was clean. Boston girl, good background, Cape Cod summer stock, a hitch at Jacob's Pillow, couple of walk-ons, some commercials, then the current bit in 'Dancing Ladies.' Believe me, that's on the Bible. Whoever is dishing

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up that dirt deserves damaged bridgework by fist. They must really have been out to get her."

"Maybe that's the nub of it, Bob. Somebody wanted her so bad he was ready to destroy her name just to get her. Thanks, Bob." I hung up and wondered how much I could be sued for when I ruined Larry Osgood's famous TV smile.

I retraced my steps to the living room, but I didn't get a chance to Clobber Ratso Osgood; something else had my attention.

Jaffee had just come out of the den with Ashley Wilkes, and she looked like she had been dragged the length of the Gowandus Canal by her heels.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Jaffee said with that affected night-school politeness that gives me the willies. "You can all go to your respective abodes, but please be available for further interrogation."

"Wait a minute, Lieutenant." Croaton Wilkes III, still unsteady, walked up to Ashley. "I have a feeling you are taking my sister somewhere."

"That's correct, Mr. Wilkes. I am booking your sister on suspicion of murder. She has been fully apprised of her legal rights."

I had gone behind the bar to get some ice cubes because Rocky was in the process of serving Olga and the puppy. I was scooping up some cubes when one fell on the floor, and being neat I bent down to pick it up. It was the luckiest calisthenic I'll ever do. When I tossed the ice into the wastebasket, everything fell into place on this caper.

In the wastebasket were the brown paper bag that had contained the tequila and the sales slip that went with it. Bingo! It would take a little bluff, but you know me, folks.

I got to my feet and said in fortissimo, "Baloney. Jaffee, you're a schnook."

Wow. That called everything to a halt. Jaffee does a triple take, Olga Lewis dropped her drink, Larry Osgood looked goo-goo.

"Maybe I'll take you in too, Kelly," Bullethead says. "This young lady has told me you suggested she withhold information. That is interfering with a police investigation and is punishable by—"

"Aw, stop sounding like a page out of the Civil Service Manual, Jaffee, and get with it. I know who killed Jimmy, and it isn't Ashley."

"Get off the pipe, Kelly, you're making your usual grandstand play."

"Okay, Lieutenant. Suppose

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everyone takes a seat. What do you have to lose? A couple of minutes?"

Ashley didn't wait for an answer. Smart kid, she walked straight to a sofa and plunked herself. Jaffee just stood there by the den door with his mouth open. So I have an audience. Everyone was up for the Hawaiian number. I sauntered out from behind the bar the same slow way Sinatra does at Caesar's Palace.

When you are doing an act, the first four minutes are crucial. They just sit there and wait, asking themselves what this guy is going to do. Don't let 'em know, bubby. Take your cotton-pickin' time. They love the suspense.

"You know, Lieutenant, one thing has bugged me since Jimmy took the dive. First off, everybody here seems to have known her better than I did. Osgood. Croaton Wilkes. Tish, Ashley, and Miss Warden were no strangers. Tell me, Olga, did you know the girl?"

She was tipsy, but the parts were working. "I never saw her before in my life, and neither has Robespierre."

"So the mutt has a name. Why were you on the terrace earlier tonight, Olga? There's a witness who saw you."

"I was getting some air. I was ill, remember? I have hypertension, and I forgot my pills."

"That's a valid reason. Was Jimmy out there too?"

"Yes, she was. All right, so I didn't mention it to the lieutenant. Who wants to get involved? She meant nothing to me."

"That's valid too, but stay cool, lady, I'm not through yet. Osgood, when you were rhapsodizing about shooting a script of Jimmy's death, you were pretty accurate when you described the terrace, flower pots and all. Been there?"

"I think you are taking me too literally, Mr. Kelly. All terraces are the same to me."

Man, I've got them listening. You know when you've made an audience. You feel it. It's cracking the fourth wall, the invisible one that drops from the proscenium arch to the apron of the stage.

"Kelly, are you nuts?" Jaffee said.

"I'm about the only one here who's sane, Lieutenant. This whole thing is like watching a train go by, and I'm the only one who recorded the numbers on the cars. Rocky is the only credible witness, and he was in the kitchen getting ice when he could have been of use. But he did see a man on the terrace when he came back. The whole nub of this is what you *don't* see. Right, Dexter?"

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Dexter Loman gives me a big smirk.

"You can wipe off the puss, buddy, because I have a little surprise for you. Lieutenant, when I walked in here tonight, I was Mr. Nogoodnik because my date was wearing the same set of social jammies as Tish. Then our hostess sent dole-boy out for tequila. When he got back with the booze, he didn't know that his ex had changed her clothes. All he saw was a pajama suit out on the terrace, and thinking it was our hostess, he pushed her over. Tish, does Dexter gain by your last will and testament?"

She looked embarrassed and horrified. "Dex won't starve. Are you saying he pushed her over thinking it was me?"

"Check and double check. Come on, Dexter, it had to be you, and nobody else but you, as the song says. My showing up here tonight told you that you were going off the dole, and you were fit to be tied. Then she makes an errand boy out of you and sends you for tequila. You were the only person here who hadn't seen the change in Tish's clothes. When you got back, neither Tish nor Jimmy was in the room, and then you spotted the pjs out on the terrace."

Dexter kept up the smirk. "That's the biggest bunch of melodrama I've heard in years, Kelly. The police can't seem to place anyone on the terrace, least of all me."

"Won't work, chum, you've been placed." I held up the paper slip for him to see. "It's the charge slip from Garrity Liquor on Lexington Avenue. Its date and time are stamped, and you signed the slip for the bottle of tequila, charged to Tish, of course. You must have dropped it out of your pocket while you were pushing the young lady bye-bye."

The rest was a mess and a half. Tish went for Dexter's throat, screaming, and Jaffee's men, after a real donnybrook, finally separated them.

Later, in the cruiser, taking Ashley and me home, Jaffee said, "You didn't find that sales slip out on the terrace, Kelly, and I know it."

"After Dexter's confession I won't have to swear to it," I grinned. "You can drop us at 71st Street."

We got out and Jaffee gives me a sour look, but I ignore it. Once the prowl car disappears down Park Avenue, I step into the street and high-sign a cab. The hack pulls in and I open the door for Ashley. She climbs in and gives me the big astonished look when I close the door behind her.

"Chick!" she says, doo-pee-

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doo. "Where are you going?"

"Take the lady where she wants to go, driver," I said to the cabbie.

"You'll call me, won't you, Chick?"

"No, Ashley, I won't call. You might offer me Bal Harbour, and I couldn't take that. Good night and goodbye." The cab drove off.

On 71st Street, just east of Lex, there is a pad, a shower, pastrami and eggs and a lady who uses lemon-scented talc. Sure, she'll be mad because I'm late, but the only dress she ever bought was off the rack. Tonight I need something that isn't custom-made. Like I always say folks, play it cool, Chick!

"Q"

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a NEW story by

HENRY T. PARRY

We never know quite what to expect in a new story by Henry T. Parry—which, of course, is the way it should be. Mr. Parry's newest is one of his most unusual . . .

LITTLE NOTE NOR LONG REMEMBER

by HENRY T. PARRY

"How did you get this detail, Johnny?"

"Just like in the Yankee army, Yank. This sergeant stuck his head in and pointed to me and said I had volunteered. He didn't care much for me because he was from South Carolina and I used to say that the South Carolinians did a lot of big talkin' before the war and then us Virginians had to do a lot of big fightin'."

"It was about that way with me. Seth Perkins, he's our corporal, sent me to see this staff captain."

"Now there's the kind of a job I like. A staff captain. The kind that says you hold this here piece of road, there ain't but ten Yankees for every Reb. Then he gets back out of range of Yankee artillery and writes a report and keeps a copy of it for his mem—ah, memories."

"Yeah, our staff is the same."

"What did he tell you, Yank? Say, what's your name?"

"Ethan Stone, First New Hampshire. What's yours?"

"Mitchell Cummins, Third Virginia."

"How is it you Rebs always have first names like Mitchell or Huger or Page? Not regular names like Pete or Joe or Ezra?"

"They're family names mostly. Seems to me any fellow whose first name is Ethan would be glad to have a different name."

"Maybe so. Anyway, this staff captain said me and somebody

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else—I guess that's you—were to go down to Weston, Pennsylvania, and when we got there we'd see what had to be done."

"That's what they told me too, though they did give me some names. I asked why they bothered to assign me duty in a Yankee town and they said that when they wanted to know what a private soldier thought about his details they would look me up. In the meantime I could just shut up and obey orders. Outside of that they didn't tell me anything."

"Me neither. Just do what you see needs doing. You got any ideas?"

"Not me, Yank. A private soldier ain't supposed to have any ideas. Same old story. Hold this here piece of road. Do what you're told even when you ain't been told. Hurry up. Wait."

"Let's drop on down there and see if we can figure out what it is we're supposed to do."

"You bring the money, Willis?"

"I got it, Pricey, but before I turn it over I want some guarantee."

"Well, I want something too, but we'll get to that. Now here's the setup. The plans for the Center Square approach go before the Weston City Council for approval tomorrow morning. There's twelve guys who will vote. Five of them belong to our party and owe their jobs to me. They'll do as I tell them. I made them and I can break them."

"They owe their jobs to you and to the money that some of us raised for their campaigns."

"So we need two votes to approve the plan. A tie vote is the same as a rejection."

"Look, Pricey, are you sure this thing is sewed up? I got a lot of dough riding on this. I got options—or somebody I know's got options—on the square property and on both sides of the street approaching the square. When the approach plans are approved, I'll exercise the options and sell the land to the state for the approach. Then I bid on the highway construction too, of course."

"Now that's where I come in. I want the compensation insurance and all the other insurance on the construction job placed through my insurance office."

"That's hardly news, Pricey, but I guess we can deal on that. But I got to be sure you got the votes tomorrow."

"Willis, I got the votes. I was afraid at first I'd get some heat

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about that monument that's in the center of the square, something to do with the Civil War. But most of the people of this town don't seem ever to have heard of the Civil War, at least not unless it's on television. And Center Square has been running down for fifty years. Stores closed. Places boarded up. Winos hanging out in abandoned buildings."

"I had Patsy come up from the Chester job and look at the square and the approach street. He says the highway engineers know what they're doing. We'll have to go right through the square and that statue will have to go. No sweat, he says, nothing but a column forty-five feet high with a soldier and a gun standing on top, and around the base they got the names of places that nobody around here ever heard of. Places like Seven Pines, Fredericksburg, Petersburg, and the Wilderness. Patsy says he could bulldoze it down or maybe set some charges that would bring it down neat enough to catch in a paper cup."

"Now, Willis, the other party would normally have seven votes they can count on, enough to stop us. But here's what is going to happen. First of all, you know Mike Ferris in the Eighth Ward. Normally Mike would like to see us all out on the street selling matches in the snow on Christmas Eve. But Mike's sister Mary has a twenty-year-old kid who is building up a rap sheet for himself. Assault, some drug charges. Then three months ago his car hits a kid out near the shopping center and kills him, and he drives away from the scene of the accident without stopping. Somebody gave the license number to the police and they picked him up in twenty minutes. He was stinking drunk. They laid a manslaughter charge on him, along with several others. Now Mike—"

"Get on with it, Pricey."

"Like I was saying, Mike isn't so strong at the county courthouse as he thought and it looked like his sister's kid was going to pull some time. Which, in my opinion, he ought. The kid is a bum. Knowing I would need Mike's help, I called Charley Tolan and told him I wanted the kid's case put on Ike Smith's calendar. Ike will give him a suspended sentence—I've already arranged for that. So that's vote number six."

"Hey, Pricey, this room bugged? You get the feeling we're being listened in on?"

"You're getting jumpy, Willis. Must be all that money you got with you. Seriously, I've had the place—what do they call

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it?—swept. By Jimmy Haley from the police. He says it's okay. Jimmy wants to make lieutenant if we ever win City Hall back.

"Now for the seventh and winning vote. Homer Castle. Good, upright, honest—well, reasonable, let's say—plain-dealing, conservative Homer. If any ward was going to oppose knocking down Center Square, monument and all, I would expect it to be Homer Castle's ward. You know him, Willis? Tall thin guy, very erect and proper, and shrewd as a fox about his public image. He wears a derby winter and summer and has for thirty years. Some say it's the same derby. He wears a belt and suspenders and he carries an umbrella every day of the year, rain or shine. It's Homer's corny way of appealing to the conservative vote in his ward and I guess he knows what he's doing. They re-elected him five times.

"Now Homer has got two weaknesses, and the first one doesn't matter. It's food. About three times a week Homer goes down to Delcy's Inn on the River Road just below town here and eats enough for a stable of horses. And pays for it too. He's not the petty chiseling type. Stays as thin as a relative's charity. But Homer's big weakness is money. And no small money. No chicken feed for our friend Homer. About once a year the right person—that means someone with a sizeable amount of cash—is able to persuade Homer to see things his way. This year, by virtue of your thirty thousand dollars, it's my great good fortune to be able to persuade Homer to see things my way on the vote for the approach plans. There's vote number seven and that's why I wanted you to bring the money with you this afternoon."

"How do you plan to deliver the cash to Homer?"

"Give cash to an elected official! What are you talking about? I don't give cash to an elected councilman. I give it to the councilman's umbrella."

"Umbrella? What's that? One of those code words?"

"No, I mean umbrella. It works this way. This evening Homer will drive down the River Road to Delcy's for dinner. When he walks into the place, complete with derby, umbrella, and that kind of sour look he has, he'll go into the Men's Room. When he comes out he will only have the derby and the sour look, the umbrella will be hanging on a hook in the Men's Room. A couple of minutes later I walk into the Men's Room and I'll drop your thirty-thousand gift into Homer's umbrella, after which I go to the parking lot and drive away. Homer suddenly realizes where he has left his umbrella and rushes to retrieve it and, of course,

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the dough, which will be lying snugly among the ribs and folds of his bumbershoot."

"How do I know that Homer is getting all thirty thousand, that you aren't holding something out?"

"You don't. And usually I would need something for party expenses. But you don't know Homer. Homer would check around—and he's got some pretty good sources—and if he found I'd been holding anything out, he'd be right down here accusing me of dishonesty—imagine!—and then would begin figuring out how to get even. I don't want to take a chance. I may want to do business again with Homer. Tell you what. You come down there with me and you can drop the envelope in Homer's umbrella yourself. I'll wait outside. He's expecting something in that umbrella tonight."

"Pricey, it's only that I've got to be sure. I'll go along down there but you put the dough in yourself."

"Homer will get there about seven. So let's get started. It gets dark so early now and that River Road isn't the easiest to drive on. Narrow, twisting, and full of holes."

"Nobody will use it once we get the new highway in. Say, when you going to move out of this place? It seems so crowded, even with just the two of us."

"Done me for thirty years, Willis, and it'll do for thirty more. Remember, I'm just a poor insurance broker, not a big highway contractor."

Weston (Pa.) Courier-Journal:

TWO DIE IN ACCIDENT

Mr. Edward Price, 65, and Mr. Willis Brewer, 52, died as a result of an auto accident when their car crashed through the guardrail on the River Road and plunged into the LeMoyne River. The body of Mr. Brewer, who was trapped inside the car, was recovered this morning. Mr. Price was thrown clear of the car and was taken to Weston Hospital where he regained consciousness briefly.

Mr. Price was able to tell the police that two long-haired youths wearing military jackets of the type popular with certain hippies stepped out into the road and attempted to flag down his car. Mr. Price said he could not avoid hitting the young men, but was unable to recall any feeling of impact. Mr. Price died of his injuries an hour later.

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A police check of local hospitals has not disclosed the admittance of any persons corresponding to the descriptions given by Mr. Price.

"Well, I guess we better be headin' back, Yank. Say, tell me, where did you get it? You ain't such a bad fellow and I wouldn't like to think that maybe I was the one who—you know what I mean? Not that it would be any different now after all these years, but just the same—"

"I know what you mean. I got it on May 5, 1864, in the battle of the Wilderness. It was my twenty-first birthday. What about you?"

"I wasn't at the Wilderness. I got it a month before the war ended. In the trenches before Petersburg. I was sixteen."

"Well, see you again maybe, Johnny."

"Yeah, see you, Yank."

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THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE

by MAGGIE MAGEE

Max was onto something big. His nose practically twitched with it—the smell of big money.

What he had were two separate pieces of information. Two independent actions were on the verge of happening, and Max was in the middle.

On the one hand there was Blueboy Sykes, trapped in his second-floor room on Pharoah Street. Blueboy was a mobster who'd made a couple of mistakes too many. It was a question now of who would get him first, the cops or his business associates. He was sitting on an arsenal in his room with groceries enough for a couple of weeks and his girl friend to keep him company.

Max had already collected his bit from that piece of information. Because of Max the cops were staked out on both corners of Blueboy's street, ready to move in. Max was a stool pigeon—being a stoolie was his part-time occupation. So he had his 30 pieces of silver from the cops and he had his 60 pieces of silver from the mob. That was all just business as usual. Max wasn't interested in the fireworks or the outcome.

On the other hand—and this was more complicated—about a month earlier there was some wheeling and dealing over a

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lookout for a bank job. The first guy Caddie Little picked out had a girl friend who was determined to make him into a suburban husband. He turned down Caddie's overture and Caddie moved on to the next man on the list. The guy who was passed over was trustworthy enough to keep his mouth shut or he wouldn't have been considered in the first place. But his girl friend was so relieved that she told the story to somebody who told it to somebody who told it to Max.

If you can figure a rat living the lifestyle of a spider you've got Max. He dealt in threads, connecting this one here and that one there until he had the whole net, or enough to move on; and then he moved.

Down at Police Headquarters they had him tagged as Maximilian Verga with a string of numbers under his full-face and profile shots. As a rule his crimes were social—blackmail, extortion, confidence games, though it's hard to imagine he could con anybody with that face. Anyway, between that and his arrangement with the cops he had everybody coming and going. A little hustle here, an armtwist there, a knowledgeable threat somewhere else—it all added up.

And Max was a worker, a full-time walking piece of bad news. It's impossible to imagine Max as anything other than the tenacious rat he had become, hard to think of a little Maxie who was the apple of his Mama's and Daddy's eye.

Okay, so that's our hero. The man in the middle. Max marks the spot.

So a month ago he had got the first inkling of the bank job and had stored it in his memory. Then there was something else. Happy Jack Jackson stopped going to the pool hall. To anybody who knew Jack that meant only one thing—he was working. Happy Jack was a concentrator. He was either busy being the best pool player in the city or he was nowhere to be seen. Then the holdup of a bank or an armored car would hit the news and Happy Jack would resurface.

It went on like that. Meanwhile Max fingered Blueboy Sykes.

And the next two threads on the bank job were the payoff. Dee-Dee Wakuski took a week's vacation from the Peacock Club where she was the featured singer. That meant Dan Moynihan was riding shotgun for the operation. Dee-Dee had an unfortunate tendency to lush a little, just enough to keep her at home while Dan was on a job.

That gave Max the lineup of

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the heavies: Caddie was the brains and backer, Happy Jack was the front man, Dan was the gunner. Max assimilated all that without thinking he'd have an "in." He just automatically sorted and stored it.

Then came the big break.

Max saw Nunzio Sidora reading a newspaper and having his shoes shined. Nunzio just happened to be far out of his usual territory and just happened to be across the street from the First National Bank that holds down the corner of Main and Pharoah.

Max was walking along as bravely as his natural slink would let him when he sighted Nunzio. He made an instinctive wheel into the nearest greasy-spoon restaurant and sat back far enough from the plateglass so that he wouldn't be seen. He watched Nunzio get his second shoe polished. Then he watched Nunzio get his first shoe polished again.

Now Nunzio was reasonably good-looking but he wasn't enough of a dandy to get a second shoeshine before he'd walked around a little with the first one.

Across the street an armored car pulled up in front of the bank. Nunzio looked up almost casually, glanced at his watch, and read his newspaper. The money bags were carried into the bank, other money bags were brought out, and the armored car drove off. Nunzio checked his watch again, folded his newspaper, gave the shoeshine boy a half dollar, and walked off down the street.

When he had disappeared Max crossed the street to have his crummy shoes shined.

"That's an absent-minded guy," he said to the boy. "He didn't even notice that you shined one of his shoes twice."

"Some kind of a kook," the boy agreed, not looking up from his work. "He's been here three days in a row now."

Max now had the job pinpointed. He had the bank, the cast, and nearly had the day. Dee-Dee was being advertised to return to the Peacock Club on the coming Saturday night.

Max's second shoe was being shined when he saw a man he knew was a plainclothes dick go into one of the residences across the street. Almost immediately a different dick came out and walked briskly away.

Stakeout, Max thought.

His brain went into a spin. He remembered Blueboy Sykes. All he'd had to do for his money was pass along the address. Now he was in the same neighborhood, without thinking twice about it. What a joke. Nunzio Sidora was casing a bank in a place where cops

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were as busy as alligators in a Tarzan movie.

Max felt his heart go like a triphammer. There was something in this for him, he was sure of it. He needed to think. He headed home to his grubby room, locked the door behind him, and sat hunched in the gloom, figuring the action.

The main point was, Caddie didn't know that he was working into a staked-out neighborhood. But more than that, Max was a key. Max could hurry the cops up. He could give them a story that would cause them to go for Blueboy without further hanging around. Max could guarantee a clear field for Caddie's operation.

And if Caddie didn't come across with a significant amount of money—say, a couple of grand—then Max could guarantee him a police reception the like of which no mayor ever got. Caddie would have to call the job off unless he had Max's help. And Caddie was already into it for a packet.

Max grinned the nasty grin he saved for the times he had somebody by the scruff of the neck.

Max felt better than a Big Boss. He felt like the guy big enough to call cops in and blow the whistle on a Big Boss. He was in the middle of the web.

He licked his lips, picked up the phone, and dialed Caddie's Pizza Parlor. They did make pizzas there, terrible ones, and sold them to unsuspecting suckers who didn't know it was a front.

It took a while to get through to Caddie.

"I've got some information you need," Max croaked when Caddie finally got on the other end of the line.

"Max, you got nothing I need," Caddie answered.

"This information you need," Max emphasized. "It's concerning how healthy the air is around Main and Pharoah."

He could hear Caddie breathing.

Then, "I'll be free in an hour. I'll expect to see you." Caddie hung up.

Max held the dead receiver, listening to the dial tone turn into a busy signal while sweat poured down all over him. He felt as if he were in a tropical shower except that he was shaking with a chill. There was a lump in his stomach. He was out of his league, and scared. He slowly hung up the telephone, and it was a long while before his hand stopped shaking.

After a few minutes spent counting his strong points he felt more secure.

At 5:15 Max was sitting in a room with Caddie Little and

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two of his boys. The "boys" both cleared six feet by inches and each weighed over two hundred pounds. Each had a heavy bulge near the left armpit.

"I'm the only one that can get the cops to spring the trap and clear out. Then it'll be a setup for you." Max licked his lips.

Caddie had sat silent through Max's story.

"You gotta be getting weak in the head, Max. You decide you need some money and you come here with a story, huh? I'm the guy that pays out for stories, huh?"

He leaned forward and looked at Max. "When I need a story I watch TV. Or I go down the block and pay a couple of bucks at the movie house." He looked at Max as if he were a piece of trash the wind had blown in.

"You'd *know* it was the truth, Caddie! It'll be in the papers. You'll know I was telling you the truth! I wouldn't try to hand *you* a line, Caddie." Max's knees felt like mush. His brave front crumpled. Caddie watched him.

"Okay, Willy, give him some money."

Max counted the bills he had been handed.

"There's only five C's here!" he whined.

"Consider yourself lucky, Max," Caddie said. "If it goes all right I might give you more. If it doesn't go right I know where to find you."

Max left Caddie's Pizza Parlor with the feeling of cold steel between his shoulder blades.

"That little creep," the hood who had handed him the money exploded.

"No problem," Caddie said softly. "No problem."

When Max got back to his room he called his connection at Police Headquarters.

"Blueboy's had some money delivered to him and he's set to blow," he said. "How much is that worth?"

The amount was paltry.

Max called Caddie.

"It's all straight, Caddie."

The hood must have been in the phone booth on the corner, waiting for Caddie's call. He was at Max's door within minutes of Max hanging up the telephone.

"Caddie sent you a bonus," he said when Max opened the door.

Max hit the floor, shot twice. He laid in a pool of his own blood while his murderer snooped around and found the payoff. There was some extra with it which went into a different pocket.

The next morning Blueboy was killed and his girl friend was wounded in the shootout.

Caddie read the newspaper account that night with no feel-

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ing of remorse for Max.

So he was right, Caddie thought, the little creep.

Two days later the bank robbers came out of the bank with the bags of money that had just been dropped off by an armored car and drove into a cordon of police cars that completely surrounded the area.

Max was the kind of guy who could never resist parlaying his luck. If the sum given by the police for Blueboy was paltry, the sum that represented a "reward" from the bank was not.

That night half a dozen big guys in the underworld, including Caddie Little, were locked up.

Max was found by his landlady a week later. She found him by the smell. Down at Headquarters his category was changed from Informer to Unsolved Homicide.

Max left this world better off than when he had lived in it. He had done Society a good turn. Over his dead body.

"Q"

DEPARTMENT OF "FIRST STORIES"

This is the 429th "first story" to be published by Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine . . . a Halloween story that will make you avoir le frisson, *give you a touch of "cauld grue" . . .*

The author, Judith Garner, wrote us: "I was born in the environs of New York in 1940 . . . I always wanted to be a writer, but through lack of funds I was unable to get beyond the first few years of college. I emigrated to Britain and worked in Fleet Street for several years . . . I realised that what I wanted to do was to write fiction . . . but none of my short stories received even a sniff of interest until now."

Mrs. Garner has been an artists' model, a census taker, an assistant housemother in a boarding school, and an assistant wardrobe mistress in a ballet company. She now lives in Brighton, the famous English seaside resort, with her husband and a ten-year-old daughter.

If Mrs. Garner hasn't tales to tell, we'll eat our editorial hat! . . .

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TRICK OR TREAT

by JUDITH GARNER

I was sitting with my American friend Bambi in our basement kitchen when the front doorbell rang. As the caretaker, I immediately rose to answer it, not for the first time cursing the necessity of taking on this job for the rent-free quarters.

It was October 30 and Mrs. Adams, my niggardly employer, had forbidden fires so early in the season. But already the chill and damp promised a fierce winter. I opened the street door to a grotesque little figure outlined against the yellow fog.

It was a small girl, about eight or nine years old, dressed as a witch in a long black university gown and pointed Welsh hat. She was not one of the tenants of our service flats, but I vaguely thought I had seen her playing in the Gardens with her Nanny and a pram. I had an idea she was an American, that her father had something to do with the Embassy. Not a pretty child, she had an old-fashioned rubber doll in a very dilapidated push-chair.

"Trick or treat?" she asked.

"Treat," I said firmly, thinking I was being offered a choice.

She looked at me expectantly, but when I made no move, she inquired, "Well, where is it then?"

"What?"

"My treat," she said patiently. "If you don't give me a treat, I'll play a trick on you."

"You be off now," I said crossly. "Why, it's extortion! You Americans are all gangsters at heart!"

I closed the door in her hostile little face and went down to the basement, where Bambi was lighting yet another of her cigarettes.

"Trick or treat," I explained.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "I didn't know you had that custom in England."

"We don't. What is it, American?"

"Yes, indeed. We always used to go out in costumes trick-or-treating in New York."

"What kind of trick can I expect?"

"Well, my mother used to let us take a sockful of flour. If you hit it against the door it leaves a lovely mark."

"I thought I heard some sort of thud as I came downstairs," I

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said, "but it didn't sound like a sockful of flour, more like a kick."

"Well, they say things are very unpleasant in the States at Halloween nowadays. How gangs will break your windows or slash your tires if you don't give them at least a dollar."

I thought the custom simply encouraged hooliganism and I said so. "Anyhow, Halloween isn't until tomorrow."

Bambi looked put out at my unfriendliness about her national customs. "Good lord!" she said. "I've been giving away pennies for the Guy for the last month. I do think Guy Fawkes is just as peculiar. Fancy burning a human figure!"

I couldn't see it that way, but I held my tongue. Tonight I resented Bambi; poor though she was personally, I envied her the affluence of her background. Besides, I had always wanted to travel myself.

I poured her another cup of tea and she reverted to her show-business anecdotes. Then Ron, my husband, joined us, and we played dominoes with the gas money until eleven.

I was up at six the next morning, bringing Ron his tea and stoking up the boiler for the hot water. At 7:30 I went up to the ground floor for the milk. The milkman was just leaving.

"Curious decorations you have around here," he said, gesturing at our front door. It certainly was odd. Nailed to the door was a doll's hand. It had a rubber skin filled with cotton; the stuffing was coming out. It looked ugly and perverted.

"If I'd seen that in Brixton or Camden Town," the man said, "you know what I would have thought? That someone was practicing voodoo. But you don't get that sort of thing around here. Not in Gloucester Road, you don't."

I pulled the dirty thing off the door and chucked it into an open dustbin. "It's all up and down the Gardens," he continued. "Bits of a doll, nailed to the doors."

Not being superstitious, I just shrugged and went upstairs to distribute the milk. Later, having got my son off to school, I began cleaning the flats and the halls.

I did not associate the mutilated doll with my small visitor of the previous evening until, Mrs. Adams having sent me out shopping, I saw the torso just being removed from Professor Newton's door.

"Creepy, isn't it?" I greeted him.

"It's that wretched Halloween child who did it. Trick or treat indeed! Something disturbing about that family. Too much

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sibling rivalry is my diagnosis. I shall make a formal protest to the parents. Better yet, I shall write a letter to the *Times*, protesting about the importing of foreign customs—noxious foreign customs!" Having with some difficulty removed the nails, the Professor took the grisly souvenir into the house with him and indignantly slammed the door.

The head of the doll was impaled on the railings at the corner. There I found Lady Arthwaite studying it with interest. "I wonder what the poor thing has done to be decapitated," she murmured to me as I passed. "Positively medieval, isn't it? Or, to be precise, it's—well, I haven't seen a doll like that since before the war. The skin texture is so much more lifelike than this disgusting plastic you get nowadays. I would have liked one like it for my little granddaughter."

But as it was chilly I could not wait around. Nevertheless, her homely words took something of the horror out of the incident. I did my shopping, and made Mrs. Adams' lunch. I worked until it became dark, which was very early.

A storm was brewing. The sky was very dark and threatening. My son got home from school just in time, but I made him a nice cup of hot cocoa anyhow, in case the chill had entered his bones. He is a delicate boy.

The rain came pelting down just after five. Ron was drenched when he came in half an hour later. "Halloween," he said. "I need a drink." I mixed the whiskey and hot lemonade the way he liked it.

He sat crouching over the newly stoked boiler in his second-hand smoking jacket. I began preparing the dinner—chops, chips, and peas, with fruit salad and custard for dessert.

We began to eat. Suddenly the front doorbell sounded again. Muttering angrily, I climbed the stairs.

The little American stood there, dressed like a pirate this time.

"Trick or treat?" she said.

This time she had her baby brother in the push-chair.

"Q"

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another "whereduni" by

CORNELL WOOLRICH

You may remember Cornell Woolrich's "The Body in Grant's Tomb" in our issue of December 1948 and more recently in ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY ANTHOLOGY, *Fall-Winter 1974 (Volume 28). This novelet was one of a series of stories conceived by Cornell Woolrich more than 35 years ago—a "pattern" of detective stories in which murders were committed in well-known places. Like so many New Yorkers, Mr. Woolrich had never actually seen most of The Big Apple's celebrated landmarks; so, armed with pencil and notebook, he went to Grant's Tomb, the Planetarium, took a trip on the Albany Night Boat, and visited other famous sightseeing sites.*

Here is the novelet that resulted from Cornell Woolrich's casing of the Statue of Liberty. Francis M. Nevins, Jr., an acknowledged expert on Cornell Woolrich's work, has written that this story "contains one of Woolrich's finest evocations of a part of New York City, and in its realistic portrait of investigative routine [circa 1935] it qualifies as one of the grandfathers of the modern police procedural story" . . .

MYSTERY IN THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

by CORNELL WOOLRICH

Katie must have been out of humor to say a thing like that, but it sure rankled. "And that's why you're no further than you are," she went on. "Ten years from now you'll still be a second-grade detective pinching pickpockets. Movies and beer—that's all you ever think of whenever you have any time to yourself. Why don't you improve your mind? Why don't you read a book? Why don't you go to a museum

Copyright 1935 by Cornell Woolrich, renewed; originally titled "Red Liberty."

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once in a while and look at the beautiful statues?"

I nearly fell over. "Look at statues!" I gasped. "What for?"

I seemed to have her there for a minute. "Why—why to see how they're made," she said finally, looking bewildered.

There didn't seem to be much sense to it, but anything to keep peace in the family. I reached for my hat and gave a deep sigh. "You win," I said. "I'll try anything once."

Riding down in the subway I got a bright idea. Instead of wasting a lot of time looking at a flock of little statues I'd look at one big one instead and get the whole thing over with. So I got out at the Battery, forked over thirty-five cents for one round-trip ticket, and got on the little ferry that takes you down the bay to the Statue of Liberty. It was the biggest statue around, and if there was any truth to what Katie said, it ought to improve me enough to last for the rest of the year.

There were about ten others making the trip with me, and as soon as everyone was on board, the tub gives a peep with its whistle and starts off, graceful as a hippopotamus. First the statue was about the size of my thumb. It came gliding over the water getting bigger all the time, until it was tall as an office building. It was pea-green, just like on the postcards.

Finally the ferry tied up at a long pier built on piles that stuck out from the island, and everybody got off. There was another crowd there waiting to get on and go back. It seems the trip is only made once every hour.

It was certainly an eyeful once you got close up under it. The stone base alone was six stories high, and after that there was nothing but statue the rest of the way. There was just room enough left over on the island for a little green lawn with cannonballs for markers, a couple of cement paths, and some benches. But on the other side, away from the city, there were a group of two-story brick houses, lived in by the caretakers I suppose.

Anyway, we went in through a thick brutal-looking metal door painted black, and down a long stone corridor, and after a couple of turns came to an elevator. A spic-and-span one too, that looked as if it had just been installed. This only went up as far as the top of the pedestal, and after that you had to walk the other 17 stories.

The staircase was a spiral one only wide enough to let one person through at a time and it made tough going, but several times a little platform opened

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out suddenly on the way up, with an ordinary park bench placed there to rest on.

There was always the same fat man sitting heaving on it by the time I got to it, with not much room left over for anybody else. When I say fat, I mean anywhere from 250 pounds up. I'd noticed him on the boat, with his thin pretty little wife. "Brother," I said the second time I squeezed in next to him on the bench, "pardon me for butting in, but why do it? You must be a glutton for punishment."

His wife had gone on the rest of the way up without waiting for him. He just wheezed for a long time, then finally he got around to answering me. "Brother," he said with an unhappy air, "she can think up more things for me to do like this. You know the old saying, nobody loves a—"

I couldn't help liking him right off. "Buck up, Slim," I said, "they're all the same. Mine thinks I'm a lowbrow and sends me out looking at statues, so I'll learn something."

"And have you?" he wanted to know.

"Yes, I've learned there's no place like home," I told him. "Well, keep your chins up," I said, and with that I left him and went on up.

At the very top you had to push through a little turnstile and then you were finally up in the head of the statue. The crown or tiara she wears, with those big spikes sticking out, has windows running from side to side in a half circle. I picked the nearest one and stuck my head out. You could see for miles.

The boats in the harbor were the size of match boxes. Down below on the lawn the cannonballs looked like raisins in a pudding. Well, I stood there like that until I figured I'd gotten my 35 cents' worth. The rest were starting to drift down again, so I turned to go too.

At the window next to me I noticed the fat man's pretty little wife standing there alone. He evidently hadn't been able to make the grade yet and catch up with her. She was amusing herself by scribbling her initials or something on the thick stone facing of the window, which was about a foot deep and wider at the outside than at the inside, the tiara being a semicircle. That was nothing. Most people do that whenever they visit any monument or point of interest.

All five of the facings were chockful of names, initials, dates, addresses, and so on, and as time and the weather slowly effaced the earlier ones there was always room for more. She

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was using an eyebrow pencil or something for hers though, instead of plain lead, I noticed.

By that time we were alone up there. The others were all clattering down the corrugated-iron staircase again, and the ferry was on its way back from the Battery to pick us up. Much as I would have enjoyed waiting to get an eyeful of the shape her stout spouse was going to be in when he got up there, I figured I'd had enough.

I started down and left her there behind me, chin propped in her hands and staring dreamily out into space, like Juliet waiting at her balcony for a high sign from Romeo.

You went down by a different staircase than you came up—I mean it was the same spiral but the outside track this time, and there was no partition between, just a handrail. There were lights strung all along the stairs at regular intervals, of course; otherwise the place would have been pitch-dark. Some were just house bulbs; others were small searchlights turned outward against the lining of the statue, which was painted silver.

In other words, anyone going up while you were coming down had to pass you in full view. No one did. The whole boatload that had come out with me was down below by now.

When I got down level with the first resting platform, with only a rail separating me from it, something caught the corner of my eye just as my head was due to go below the platform. I climbed back up a step or two, dipped under the railing, and looked under the bench, where it lay. Then I saw what it was and reached in and pulled it out. It was just somebody's brown felt hat, which had rolled under the bench.

I turned it upside down and looked in it. A Knox hat—and P.G. were the initials. But more important, it hadn't been left there yesterday or last week, but just now. The sweat on the headband hadn't dried yet, and there was plenty—the leather strip was glistening with it.

That was enough to tell me whose it was, the fat guy's. He'd been sitting on this bench when I left him—dripping with exertion—and I remembered seeing this very lid in his hand, or one the same color and shape. He'd taken it off and sat holding it in his hand while he mopped his melting brow.

He hadn't gone on up to where I'd left his wife, for he'd neither arrived while I was still up there nor had he passed me on the way down. It was a cinch he'd given it up as a bad job and gone on down from here, without tackling the last

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of the 17 "stories" or twists. Still I couldn't figure how he could come to forget his hat, leave it behind like this, fagged out or not.

Then I thought, "Maybe the poor gink had a heart attack, a dizzy spell or something and had to be carried down—that's how it came to be overlooked." So I took it with me and went on down to try and locate him and hand it back to him.

I rang when I got to where the elevators started from, and when the car had come up for me I asked the operator, "What happened to that fat guy, know the one I mean? Anything go wrong with him? I picked up his hat just now."

"He hasn't come down yet," he told me. "I'd know him in a minute. He must be still up there."

"He isn't up above—I just came from there myself. And he's the last guy in the world who'd walk down the six stories from here when there's a car to take him. How do you figure it?"

"Tell you where he might be," said the attendant. "Outside there on the parapet. They all go out there for a last look through the telescope before they get in the car."

"Well, wait there for a minute until I find out. If he shows up tell him I've got his hat."

I went out and made a complete circuit of the place, then doubled back and did it in reverse. Not a soul on it. It was a sort of terrace that ran around the top, protected by a waist-high stone ledge on all four sides. It was lower down than the head of Miss Liberty of course, but still plenty high.

I went back to the elevator operator. "Nothing doing. You sure you didn't take him down in your car without noticing?"

"Listen," he said. "When he got on the first time he almost flattened me against the door getting in. I woulda known it the second time. I ain't seen him since."

"Are there any lavatories or restrooms on the way up?"

"Naw," he said, "nothing like that."

"Then he musta walked down the rest of the way without waiting for you. Take me down to the bottom—"

"If he did, he's the first one ever did that yet. That's what the elevators are here for." He threw the switch. "Say," he said, and I saw his face light up as if he was almost hoping something would happen to break the monotony of his job, "maybe he—you don't suppose he—"

I knew what he was driving

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at. "You're trying to tell me he took a jump for himself, aren't you? G'wan, he couldn't have even raised himself up over that stone ledge out there to do it! And if he had, there'd a been a crowd around him below. Everyone on the island woulda seen him land. I looked down just now. They're all strolling around, addressing postcards, waiting for the boat."

His face dropped. "They none of 'em try that from here, they always pick bridges instead. Nothing ever happens here."

"Cheer up, Suicide Johnny," I told him, "your cage will probably fall down the shaft some day and kill everyone in it."

When he let me out I made straight for the concession pavilion down near the pier, where most of the ten who had come out with me were hanging around buying postcards and ice-cream cones, waiting for the ferry to pull in. It wasn't more than 50 yards away by this time, coasting in a big half circle from the right to get into position, with its engine already cut off.

The fat man wasn't in the refreshment house—one look inside from the doorway told me that. I asked one or two of the others if they'd seen him since they'd come out of the statue. Nobody had, although plenty had noticed him going in—especially on the way up—just as I had.

"He must be around some place," one of them suggested indifferently. "Couldn't very well get off the island until the ferry came back for him."

"No kidding?" I remarked brittlely. "And here I am thinking he went up in a puff of smoke!"

I went around to the other side of the base, following a series of cement walks bordered with ornamental cannonballs. No rotund gentleman in sight. I inquired at the dispensary at the back of the island, and even at one or two of the brick cottages the caretakers lived in, thinking he might have stopped there because of illness or out of curiosity. Nothing doing.

I completed my circuit of the terraced lawn that surrounds the statue and returned to the front of it again. It had dawned on me by now that I was going to a hell of a whole lot of trouble just to return a man's hat to him, but his complete disappearance was an irritant that had me going in spite of myself.

It was the size of the man that burned me more than anything. I wouldn't have minded if it had been somebody less conspicuous, probably wouldn't have noticed him in the first place, but to be as big as all

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that and then to evaporate completely—

The ferry was in when I got back and the passengers were straggling up the long, almost horizontal gangplank. It hadn't brought anybody out with it this trip, as the statue was closed to visitors after 4:30 each day and this was its last round-trip.

"Turn this in at the lost-and-found for me, will you?" I said, shoving the hat at one of the soldiers on pier duty as I went by. "I just found it up there."

"Hand it in at the other end, at the Battery," he said. "That's where they come and claim things."

I was so dead-sure of lamping the lid's owner on the ferry, this being its last trip back, that I hung onto it without arguing and went looking for him in the "saloon," or whatever they call the between-decks part of a ferry. Meanwhile the landing platform had been rolled back and we'd started to nose up the bay.

"He's got to be on here," I said to myself. "He's not spending the night back there on the island. And nothing that floats came to take him off between the time we all got off the first time and just now when this thing called back for us." I knew that for a fact, because the ferry only made the run once every hour, on the half hour, and it was the only one in service.

So I went all over the schooner from bow to stern, upstairs, downstairs, inside and out. In the saloon a couple of kids were sitting one on each side of their father, swinging their legs over the edge of the long bench that ran all around it. And a guy who didn't give a hoot about the skyline outside was reading Hellinger in the *Mirror*. Nobody else.

On the port deck the other half dozen were sitting in chairs, just like they would on a transatlantic greyhound only without rugs, and a couple were leaning over the rail trying to kid themselves they were on an ocean trip. He wasn't there either.

Then when I went around to the starboard deck, (only maybe it was the port and the other was the starboard—don't expect too much from a guy that was never farther away than Coney Island), there was his wife sitting there as big as life, all by herself and the only person on that side of the skow which faced good old Joisey.

I walked by her once and took a squint at her without stopping. She never even saw me. She was staring peacefully, even dreamily, out at the bay.

Now, I had no absolute proof

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that she was his wife, or had made the excursion with him at all. He had mentioned his wife to me, so his wife was along with him, no doubt about that. But each time I had overtaken him on one of the benches inside the statue his wife had gone up just ahead of him and I had missed seeing her. Then when I got up to the top this particular woman had been up there ahead of me scrawling her initials.

That much I was sure of. She had been at the next observation window to me with that same "come-and-take-me" faraway look that she had now. But it was only by putting two and two together that I had her labeled as his wife; I had no definite evidence of it. So I stopped up at the other end of the narrow little deck and turned and started back toward her.

I don't care who a guy is or what his job is, it isn't easy for him to accost a woman sitting minding her own business like that, unless he's the masher type—which I'm not. "If she gives me a smack in the puss," I said to myself, "I'm gonna throw this son-of-a- —— hat in the water and make up my mind I never saw any fat guy; it was just a trick of the lighting effects in the statue!"

I stopped dead in my tracks in front of her, tipped my hat, and said, "Pardon me, but I've got your husband's hat here." I held it out.

She looked me up and down and a lot of little icicles went tinkling along the deck. "I don't know what you're talking about," she said. "I haven't any husband—and I'm not interested in picking one up on a ferryboat in the bay!"

This was enough to sour a saint; it was rubbing it in a little too much. First there's a fat man and his wife. Then there's no fat man. And now it seems there's no wife either. Only a hat.

"I'm no picker-upper," I growled. "Just let's get this straight though. On the way over I distinctly noticed you with a very hefty gentleman. You were talking to each other. You were sitting side by side out on this deck bench. And you both stood up together when it was time to get off. I remember that distinctly on account of your shapes reminded me of the number ten. Then later I saw the guy by himself in there. And that's the last; he does a fadeout. Now all I'm trying to do is get this blasted kelly back to—"

The temperature didn't go up any. "Well, why pick on me?" she said. "Why marry me off to him and turn me into his hatcheck girl in the bargain?

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Who are you, anyway, the census taker? All right, a fat clown did sit down next to me on the way out and try to take a shine to me. So what? I never saw him before in my life, don't know his name from Adam.

"You saw me talking to him all right—I told him a thing or two, only I'm not the kind who screams for help and makes a scene. And if he stood up at the same time I did and tried to stick close to me, I outdistanced him once we hit those stairs, don't you worry. And if you think you rate any higher than he did just 'cause your stomach goes in instead of out, think again! Next time I go on an excursion I'm bringing a bulldog along—"

"Oh, just one of these strong silent women! Not a word to say, eh?" I told her. "Well, suppose you give me your name and address, just for fun."

She hoisted herself up and took a quick step away. "I'm going to get a cop!" she burst out.

I sidestepped around and got in front of her. "You've got one," I said and let the badge slide back into my vest pocket again. "Now are you going to tell me what I asked you?"

"You can't compel me to give you my name if I don't want to!" she said hotly. "Who do you think you're dealing with, some fly-by-night chippy? I don't care whether you're a detec—"

Which was true enough, as far as that goes. But she had me steamed up by now. "Either you identify yourself or you can consider yourself under arrest!" I didn't have a thing on her, and I knew it. I had no way of proving that what she had told me about the fat man wasn't so.

True, he had mentioned his wife to me, sitting on the bench in the statue, but he hadn't tagged this particular woman or anyone else in the group as being "it." He hadn't even made it clear whether his wife had accompanied him on the excursion. For all I knew she might be sitting at home at this very moment, just as my own was.

Meanwhile, "—never so insulted in my life!" she was boiling, but she was going through the motions of coming across, with angrily shaking hands. She threw back the lid of her pocketbook and fished around inside it. "I didn't expect a third degree like this," she snapped, "so I didn't bring my pedigree with me! However, I'm Alice Colman, Van Raalte Apartments, Tarrytown. Take it or leave it!"

I felt like two cents by now, especially as I noticed her eyes growing shiny with tears. Even if the fat man had met with foul play, which there was no

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proof of so far, she hadn't been anywhere near him at the time it happened. She had been away up at the top looking dreamy. I was only doing this because I'd seen them together on the trip out, and she needn't have made me feel like such a lug.

I covered it up by going through with what I was doing, taking out my notebook and jotting down the info. "Miss Alice Colman," I said out loud, squinting down my pencil.

"I didn't say that!" she flared. "Oh, let me alone, you dog!" and she whisked herself off down the deck as if she couldn't stand any more. I could see her shoulders shaking as she went. I let her alone after that, didn't try to follow her up.

"Well, well, well," I sighed, "I certainly have the light touch with dolls!" Her last crack, I took it, meant that she was a Mrs. and not a Miss.

If I had any doubts that the fat guy might have turned out to be on the ferry after all, hiding behind a cuspidor or something, and that I had simply missed seeing him until now, they were very soon settled once the tub had tied up at the South Ferry landing. I stationed myself on the lower end of the plank ahead of everyone, and stopped them one by one as they tried to go past.

"Police headquarters . . . Name, please . . . Address. Got anything to back it up?" And I killed the inevitable "What's this for?" each time it came with a terse, "None of your business!"

When I was through I had a line on everyone who had made the outing with me—at least if anything turned up now I would no longer be in the dark. All but the guy who was missing. And he was still missing. He had definitely not made the trip back on the boat.

The Colman person was the last one off, and came sailing by me head in air with the cold remark: "Be sure you follow me—lowdown common bully!"

I just stood there and looked after her, scratching my head. It was only after she'd gone that I realized she was the only one of the lot who hadn't backed up her name and address with documentary proof.

But meanwhile there was something else I wanted to see about.

I went around to the ticket office in the ferry building; it was closed, of course. Ours had been the last trip of the day. I hammered on the wicket, and then I went around and pounded on the door. Luckily they were still in there, counting the day's receipts or some-

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thing. I recognized the guy that had sold me my own ticket.

"Headquarters, it's all right, lemme in a minute." And when he had, "Now, look. Do you remember selling a ticket down the bay to a fat guy, puffy cheeks like this, blue suit, brown hat, when the last boatful went out?"

"Yeah," he said, "yeah, I do."

"How many did he buy? One or two?"

"Two," he said decidedly. "I been selling 'em all day long, but I can remember that all right because he was lame-brained, couldn't count straight. He wanted to tell me four-forty change was coming to him out of a fin. I says, 'Buddy,' I says, 'in my country two times thirty-five adds up to—' "

"Never mind the trailer," I squelched. "Did she—did anyone come up to the window with him when he bought them?"

"Naw, he come up to the window alone and bought two tickets. I didn't see who was with him."

"Being sore at him, you didn't take a gander out the window after he moved on? Most ticket sellers would."

"They were all on line," he explained, "I didn't have time, had to wait on the next rubberneck."

Well, if he'd bought two tickets his wife was with him—he hadn't bought them just because he was overweight himself, that was a cinch. As for his wife, runner-up to himself when it came to staying out of sight, little Alice Colman was elected for the time being. Which added up to this—I was going back to that island. She could hold for a while. If nothing had happened to him, then it was none of my business whether she was wife, girl friend or total stranger to him. But if something had—

I beat it outside to the ferry again. It was still there, but fixing to go wherever it is they go for the night when they're not in service. Or maybe it was just going to stay put. But not while I knew it.

A couple of tattooed arms tried to bar my way up the gangplank. "One side," I said, and the badge was getting a high polish just from rubbing against the serge so much. "I gotta see the captain before he slips off his suspenders!"

"He uses safety pins," he corrected me dryly, "but go ahead—"

He came out of the saloon just then struggling into a pea-jacket, evidently going ashore to catch up on his suds.

"Say, y'gotta take me back there," I burst out. "Here's what—" And I explained all

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about the hefty passenger that had gone out and hadn't come back.

He was one person the badge didn't mean a thing to; he was used to being boss of the roost. "Go 'way, man, you're out of your head!" he boomed. "This boat's asleep for tonight. I wouldn't make another run there for St. Peter himself. If he missed it and got left behind, that's his tough luck. He'll just have to wait over until nine in the morning—there are plenty of benches on the island, just like Central P—" and he took the most graceful spiral spit over the rail I had ever seen —and made it.

"But y' don't get what I mean!" I howled, shoving the brown felt in his face. "He didn't just miss it—something happened to him. Now give your orders. You know what this means, don't you? You're obstructing—"

"I take my orders from the company," he said surlily, looking longingly in the direction of the dives along South Street. "If that piece of tin means anything why don't it get you a police launch?"

But I wasn't going to be a back-room laughing-stock for the rest of the year in case I did get there with a launch and find the fat guy had stayed behind to pick dandelions or something. I went ashore again and had it out with one of the agents in the ferry house, and he in turn had to telephone one of the higher muck-a-mucks and put it up to him, and then sign an order for me to show the captain.

Some reporters had gotten wind that something was up, in the mysterious way that only reporters can, and a couple of them were already hanging around outside when I came out. "What's the excitement?" they wanted to know, licking their chops. "What's it all about?" "Wotcha doing with two hats?" one of them cracked.

"I always carry a spare," I said, "in case the wind blows the first one off."

They looked sort of doubtful, but before they could do anything about it I was back on the ferry and gave orders to keep them off. "Here's your instructions, Admiral," I told the captain who was drooling by this time and biting his nails at the thought of being kept overtime. "I'll buy the first ten rounds," I assured him, "if this turns out to be a wild-goose chase."

"Hrrmph!" he growled, and turned around and hollered an order.

Back we plugged.

"How long you gonna be?" he wanted to know as I loped off at the island.

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"When I show up again," I promised, "I'll be back." That old fellow could swear.

The thick, chilly-looking, black metal doors that led into the base were shut tight by this time. I had to get another permit from an officer on the island, and two soldiers were detailed to come with me. The only one who seemed to get any kick out of the proceedings was Suicide Johnny, who was routed out to run us up in the elevator. He was all grins. At last something was happening to break his monotony.

"Gee," he said, throwing the switch in the car, "maybe he committed sewercide by hanging himself up there some place!"

"Nuts," I growled, "he couldn't have hoisted himself an inch—not without a derrick. We'll go up to the top," I told my two escorts when we got out of the car. "Start in from there and work our way down." They didn't say anything, but I could read their minds: 'This guy was dropped on his head when he was a kid.'

We climbed all that weary way back again and finally stood there panting. "He never got up this far," I said when I had my wind back, "because I was up here ahead of him. But I want to take a gander at some of these initials and names scrawled here on the stonework of the windows."

"Aw, them!" said one of the soldiers contemptuously, "every chump that ever comes up here since the place was built has a crack at that."

"That's just the point," I said. I had a close look, first of all, at what my chief rooter and admirer, Alice Colman, had written, at the window next to the one I'd been standing at originally. It didn't say Alice Colman, it didn't say any name, but I knew her work. She'd used an eyebrow pencil and the mark it left was dark and greasy, different from the thin faint pencil marks of the rest of them. It stood out like a headline on a newspaper.

I turned to one of the bored soldiers. "What's today's date?"

"The twenty-third," he said.

That's what I'd thought it was too. But Alice Colman seemed to have gotten her dates mixed. She had it down as the twenty-fourth. Well, that could happen to anyone. But she had the hours right, at least. She'd even put that down—*4* o'clock. Some people are like that, though. She'd visited this place at four o'clock and she wanted the world to know.

On top of that, though, came a hitch. She had an address

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down, and it wasn't her own. It was just five numbers and a letter, all run together. *254W51*. But that wasn't her own address. She'd given me that on the ferry, and I'd checked on it while I was hanging around in the ferry house waiting for the permit to come back here.

Yes, the management of the Van Raalte Apartments had told me long-distance over the phone from Tarrytown that Mrs. Alice Colman was a tenant of theirs. So she hadn't lied to me, yet she'd lied to the world at large when she was making her mark on Lady Liberty. There was something that I didn't get about it.

"Let's go down," I told the soldiers, "I want a look at that bench he was sitting on." By this time they both hated me heartily from the guts outward, I could see, but they turned and led the way.

We never got there, though. About midway between the head and where the bench was—in other words at about where the statue's shoulder came—there was a gap with a chain across it bearing a placard reading: *Public Not Admitted*. I had noticed this twice before, the first time I came up and then later when I had gone down to look for him.

Maybe the chain had thrown me off, the undisturbed chain stretched across it. And then, too, until you stood directly before it, it looked far smaller and inaccessible than it actually was, the way the lights slurred past it and made it seem no more than a fold on the inside of the lady's gigantic metal draperies.

This time, though, I stopped and asked them what it was.

"Oh, he ain't up in there!" they assured me instantly. "Nobody's allowed in there. Can't you read what that says? That used to lead up into the arm and torch in the old days. The arm started weakening little by little, so they shut the whole thing off a long time ago. It's boarded up just a little ways past the ch— hey!" he broke off. "Where you going? You can't do that!"

"I'm going just that little ways between the chain and where the boarding is," I told him, spanning the cable with one leg. "If the arm lasted this long, one more guy ain't going to hurt it, I don't weigh enough. Throw your lights up after me. And don't tell me what I can't do when you see me already at it!"

The thing was a spiral, just like the other staircase that led to the head. Or rather, it started out to be, but at the very first half turn, the board-

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ing showed up, sealing it from top to bottom. That half turn, however, cut off their lights, which shone in a straight line like any lights would. A triangle of blackness was left in one corner which they couldn't eliminate, no matter how they maneuvered the flashlights.

"Come on a little nearer with those things!" I called impatiently. "Come past the chain!"

They wouldn't budge. "Against orders," they called back.

I came down a few steps and reached for a light myself. "Let me have one. What d'ya think I'm doing, playing hide and seek with you? How we won the last war beats me!"

I jumped up again and washed out the stubborn wedge of blackness with the thin beam in my hand.

Sure he was there. And fitted in just as neatly as though the space had been measured off for him ahead of time. In a sitting position on the turn of the steps, back propped against the boarding, legs drawn up under him to help keep him propped.

I touched the side of his neck. He was as cold already as the metal statue that made a tomb for him.

"Got him," I shouted laconically. "Come on up and gimme a hand, you two."

"What's he doing up there?" one of those two clucks wanted to know.

"Waiting for Judgment Day."

They came on up, orders or no orders.

I bent down and looked at the backs of his shoes. The leather of both heels was scraped and scarred. The backs of his trousers were dusty all the way to the knees.

"Dragged by the shoulders," I said, "by just one guy. If there'd been two, one of them would have taken him by the feet, like you're going to do getting him down out of here."

"How could one guy, any one guy, haul that baby elephant all the way up there?" one of them wanted to know.

"You'd be surprised what one guy can manage to do if he's scared enough and has to work in a hurry," I assured him. "All right, get started. I'll handle your lights. It wasn't done up here anyway, so let's get down before we all take a header into the ocean, arm and all."

It wasn't easy, even for the two of them, to get down with him. Automatically I figured that eliminated Alice Colman or any other woman as having had any part in it—except as an accessory.

The thing that had done it was lying under him when they got him up—a wicked-looking iron bar wrapped in a stiffened,

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blood-brown piece of rag. The wound—it was a deadly fracture—was on the side of the head just over the ear. He hadn't bled much, outside of the first splash on the padded weapon itself. The little there was after that had clung to the skin, running down behind the jawbone and into the collar of his shirt, hence no blood around the bench where the attack had occurred.

I examined the area around the bench. The two little "tracks" his heels had made as he was dragged backward toward the hiding place were there plain as day under my flashlight's beam, without the need of any powder or hocus-pocus of any kind. My only wonder was how I'd muffed seeing them when I stooped down to pick up his hat. But of course I hadn't used a light then.

"Take him on down the rest of the way," I said. "No use parking with him here—it's gotta be done sooner or later anyway."

They loved the job—yeah, they did! They must have lost ten pounds apiece in sweat, getting him down those 17 stories of narrow spiral staircase. When they were down at the elevator you could hear their heaving all the way up where I was.

When I got down myself—I'd waited on the murder bench until the way was clear, no use dogging their footsteps an inch at a time—Suicide Johnny, with the body tucked into his car and the two guards in a state of collapse alongside of it, was wreathed in smiles. His fondest dream had come true. Something had at last happened! "Gee!" he kept murmuring. "Gee, a moider!"

I had Fatty carried over to the barracks, and an apoplectic-looking guy of Spanish War vintage whose collar was too tight for him came out to see what it was all about.

"Sorry to bother you," I said, "but there's just been a crime committed in your jurisdiction—man murdered up in the statue."

"Who are you, sirrr?" he boomed like a twenty-one-gun salute. I felt like I was going to be shot at sunrise for daring to find anything the matter around his diggings.

"Denton, New York Homicide," I told him.

"Are you sure, sirrrr?" the old rooster crowed. He meant about the murder, not who I was. He wasn't going to believe me until he saw it with his own eyes, so I took him over and showed it to him.

"Now, just where do I stand?" I said.

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"This, sirr," he orated, "is United States Government property. This is a matter for the Federal inves—"

I'd expected that. "Oh, so I get the air!" I interrupted heatedly. "After I been up and down that blank statue eighty-six times today. Okay, you put who you want on it. I'm going right ahead with it on my own. And we'll see who comes out ahead!"

I got as far as the door, then I turned around and fired at him, "I'll even give your guy a headstart, just so you can't accuse me of withholding information. This guy is tagged Colman. He lived until today at the Van Raalte Apartments, Tarrytown, with his wife, who is thin, blonde, pretty, blue eyes, about twenty-eight, and very ritzy front. But you won't find her there any more, so you can tell your guy to save his carfare. She didn't do it anyway. But if you want to get hold of her, and the guy that actually did it, I'll tell you where to look for them—"

"Where, sirrr?" he boomed like a great big firecracker.

"Today is Wednesday, isn't it?" I answered detachedly. "Well, send your guy around to Centre Street, say, day after tomorrow, that would be Friday. We'll be holding 'em both for you down there by that time. No trouble at all, Field Marshal." He sort of blew up internally, so I got out before he did anything about calling a firing squad.

I ducked into the statue again, for what I hoped was the last time, and decided to make Suicide Johnny useful, since he seemed to be enjoying himself so. "How would you like to help?" I said. "Come on up with me."

When we got all the way up to the head, I took out my pocket notebook and opened it at the page where all the names were, the names I'd collected from the ten (eight really, excluding the two kids with their father) who had made the trip here and back on the ferry.

Excluding Colman himself and his wife (who couldn't have been an actual participant for reasons I've already given) that left six. Excluding two other women who'd been in the group, that boiled it down to four.

Now the name, of course, was going to be phony—I mean the name the actual murderer had handed me—that was a pushover. But that didn't matter. All I wanted was to connect the right guy with any name, phony or otherwise, just so I could remember something about what he'd looked like. Any little thing at all.

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"You take a pencil," I told Suicide, "and each time I call out a name, you cross off the corresponding one written down there in that book. That's all."

"Gee!" he said. "I'm helping a real detective!"

"My chief," I answered dryly, "sometimes has grave doubts about that. Ready? Let's go."

I started going over the window ledges inch by inch. They were crawling with names and initials, but I finally located one that matched one in the notebook. Johnny promptly crossed it out. Then another. Then a triple initial that matched.

"Don't cross yet," I warned him, "just put a check next to that."

Well, when we got through, we had nine of the ten names, women, kids and all. All of them had scribbled their names as mementoes on the stone work. "Now, which one's left over?" I asked Suicide.

He screwed up his face and read, "Vincent Scanlon, 55 Amboy Street, Brooklyn, real estate."

"On circumstantial alone, that's my guy."

"Hully mackerel!" said the enraptured Johnny. "Can y'tell just by hearing his name like that?"

"His name ain't Scanlon, he don't live on Amboy Street, and he's not in real estate," I tried to explain. "But he's the only one of the bunch who didn't come up here and scrawl his John Hancock. Me and the fat guy were the last ones coming up the stairs. When I left him on the bench he was still alive. When I got up here myself, even his wife was up here ahead of me, and all the others had finished their signatures and were on their way down again. Therefore, this guy who tags himself Scanlon was the murderer.

"Don't you understand, he never went all the way to the top. He either came up the stairs behind me and the fat guy, or else if he was ahead of us switched into the opening that leads up into the arm, let everyone else go by, and then crept down again to where the bench was—and did his dirty work the minute the coast was clear."

I took the notebook from him, held it open before me, and did my damnedest to try and separate the one who had given me that name from the others. I tried to remember some feature about him, some detail, anything at all, and couldn't no matter how I racked my brains. There had been too many of them at one time, all getting off the ferry at once, all stopping

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in front of me just for a half minute or so.

He should have been nervous, just coming away from doing a thing like that, should have been pale, tense, jumpy—should have given himself away in some way, if not right then, then now that I was thinking back over it. But he either hadn't, or—what was more likely—I was pretty much of a washout at my own business. I couldn't even get him by elimination, the way I had gotten his phony name.

One or two of the others started to come clear—the father of the two kids, the two other women besides Alice Colman—but not him. I might just as well have written down that name out of my own head for all I could remember of the man who had given it to me.

I took another look at Alice Colman's regards to the statue and wondered why she hadn't put her name down with it, and how she had come to be mixed up on her dates the way she had. And why a different address from her own? Of course the obvious answer was that she knew damned well what was taking place on that stairway below at the time, and was too nervous to know what she was doing.

But she hadn't acted nervous at all; she had just acted dreamy. So that probably wasn't the answer at all.

And just for luck I transcribed the thing into my notebook exactly as it stood in eyebrow pencil. *4/24/35/4* and then, *254W51*. Wrong date, right hour, wrong address, no name.

"I take it all back, Johnny," I said wearily. "Kick me here—and here. The guy did come up here after all—and right on top of what he did too."

"But he didn't write nothing—you looked all over them wind—"

"He didn't come up here to write, he came to read." I pointed at it. "He came to read that. Let's go down. I guess I can keep my promise to General Lafayette down there after all."

When I got ashore I half-heartedly checked Colman at the Tarrytown Apartments once more. No, neither Mr. nor Mrs. had come back yet, they told me after paging them on the house phone. I didn't tell them so, but they might just as well have hung out a To Let sign and gotten ready to rent that apartment all over again. He wasn't coming back any more because he was spending the night at the morgue. And she wasn't coming back—because she had a heavy date at 4.

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As for Scanlon's Amboy Street address, I didn't even bother with it. Have to use your common sense once in a while. Instead I asked Information to give me 254 West 51st Street, which was the best I could make out of the tag end of her billet-doux.

"Capital Bus Terminal," a voice answered at the other end.

So that's where they were going to meet, was it? They'd stayed very carefully away from each other on the ferry going back, and ditto once they were ashore in New York. But they were going to blow town together. So it looked like she hadn't had her days mixed after all, she'd known what she was doing when she put tomorrow's date down. "What've you got going out at four?" I asked.

"A.M. or P.M.?" said the voice. But that was just the trouble, I didn't know myself. Yet if I didn't know, how was he going to know either? I mean Scanlon. The only thing to do was tackle both meridians, one at a time. A.M. came first, so I took that. He spieled off a list a foot long but the only big-time places among them were Boston and Philly. "Make me a reservation on each," I snapped.

"Mister," the voice came back patiently, "how can you go two places at once?"

"I'm twins," I squelched and hung up. Only one more phone call, this time to where I was supposed to live but so seldom did. "I may see you tomorrow. If I came home now I'd only have to set the alarm for three o'clock."

"I thought it was your day off."

"I've got statues on the brain."

"You mean you would have if you had a—" she started to say, but I ended that.

I staggered into the bus waiting room at half-past three, apparently stewed to the gills, with my hat brim turned down to meet my upturned coat collar. They just missed each other enough to let my nose through, the rest was shadow. I wasn't one of those drunks that make a show of themselves and attract a lot of attention. I just slumped onto a bench and quietly went to sleep. Nobody gave me a first look, let alone a second one.

I was on the row of benches against the wall, not out in the middle where people could sit behind me. At 3:40 by the clock I suddenly remembered exactly what this guy Scanlon had looked like on the ferry that afternoon. Red hair, little pig-eyes set close together—what difference did it make now, there he was, valise between his legs. He had a newspaper

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up over his face in a split second, but a split second is plenty long enough to remember a face in.

But I didn't want him alone, didn't dare touch him alone until she got there, and where the hell was she? 3:45, the clock said—3:50—3:55. Or were they going to keep up the bluff and leave separately each at a different time, and only get together at the other end?

Maybe that message on the statue hadn't been a date at all, only his instructions. I saw myself in for a trip to Philly, Boston, what-have-you, and without a razor, or an assignment from the chief.

The handful of late-night travelers stirred, got up, moved outside to the bus, got in, with him very much in the middle of them. No sign of her. It was the Boston one. I strolled back and got me a ticket, round-trip. Now all that should happen would be that she should breeze up and take the Philly one —and me without anyone to split the assignment!

"Better hurry, stew," said the ticket seller handing me my change, "you're going to miss that bus."

"Mr. Stew to you," I said mechanically, with a desperate look all around the empty waiting room. Suddenly the door of the ladies' restroom flashed open and a slim sprightly little figure dashed by, lightweight valise in hand. She must have been hiding in there for hours, long before he got here.

"Wait a minute!" she started to screech to the driver the minute she hit the open. "Wait a minute! Let me get on!" She just made it, the door banged, and the bus started.

There was only one thing for me to do. I cut diagonally across the lot, and when the driver tried to make the turn that would take him up Fifty-first Street I was wavering in front of his headlights. Wavering but not budging. "Wash'ya hurry?" I protested. His horn racketed, then he jammed on his brakes, stuck his head out the side, and showed just how many words he knew that he hadn't learned in Sunday School.

"Open up," I said, dropping the drunk act and flashing my badge. "You don't come from such nice people. And just for that—" I climbed aboard— "you're out three passengers. Me—and this gentleman here—and, let's see, oh yeah, this little lady trying so hard to duck down behind the seat. Stand up, sister, and get a new kind of bracelet on your lily-white wrist."

Somebody or other screamed and went into a faint at the

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sight of the gun, but I got them both safely off and waved the awe-stricken driver on his way.

"And now," I said as the red tail lights turned down Eighth Avenue and disappeared, "are you two going to come quietly or do I have to try out a recipe for making goulash on you?"

"What was in it for you?" I asked her at headquarters. "This Romeo of yours is no Gable for looks."

"Say listen," she said scornfully, accepting a cigarette, "if you were hog-tied to something that weighed two hundred ninety pounds and couldn't even take off his own shoes, but made three grand a month and banked it in your name, and someone came along that knew how to make a lady's heart go pit-a-pat, you'd a done the same thing too!"

I went home and said, "Well, I've gotta hand it to you. I looked at a statue like you told me to, and it sure didn't hurt my record any." But I didn't tell which statue or why. "What's more," I said, "we're going down to Washington for the weekend."

"Why Washington?" my wife wanted to know.

"'Cause they've got the biggest of the lot down there, called the Washington Monument. And a lotta guys that think they're good, called Federal dicks, hang out there and need help."

"Q"

DETECTIVERSE

PSEUDO-WHO?

by JOHN D. MORSE

Of William Irish
I'm most admirish.
I also itch
To read Woolrich.
I wish I knew
When which is which.

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THE JURY BOX

by JOHN DICKSON CARR

There's much to discuss. Beginning with the biography of a royal personage whose career so touched our hobby, we go on to three paperback reprints alike only in superior blood and thunder. These four titles embrace so wide a field of sensationalism that it will allow no introductory philosophizing; I must get down to business at once.

Though Antonia Fraser's *King James VI of Scotland and I of England* (Knopf, $12.95) has been described by its author as a "biographical essay," her claim is much too modest. Vividly readable, lavishly illustrated, it sums up all late research on that strange son of Scotland's doomed Queen Mary, James Stuart, who inherited the throne of Great Britain from Elizabeth I in 1603.

Shambling and slobbering, with tongue too large for his mouth, "the wisest fool in Christendom" sometimes seems little more than a semi-comic grotesque, all contradictory traits. He really loved his wife, Anne of Denmark, despite homosexual leanings towards more than one favorite. While admiring austerity, he was both glutton and sot. His immense erudition too often became mere pedantry, nor could he curb his constant extravagance. And yet, though frequently foolish, he was never stupid. He preserved peace for Britain, against all pressures to the contrary; and, directing every move, he sponsored the version of the Bible which forever bears his name.

What's he doing in a mystery magazine? Despite James's innocence, four celebrated crimes influenced his life. Who strangled his father, Lord Darnley, on the night Kirk o' Field was blown up? As King of Scots, James barely escaped harm in the Gowrie conspiracy, another mystery still unsolved.

True, he ran little risk from that abortive Gunpowder business of '05, and figured only as *amicus curiae* in the poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury. But, if I can persuade you to read more than Lady Antonia Fraser's brilliant summary, and investigate such fascinating historical riddles as the murder of Darnley or the

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Gowrie imbroglio at Perth, then at least I shall have done something towards justifying my life.

In *A Prayer for the Dying,* by Jack Higgins (Fawcett, $1.25), today's most reliable hand at action thrillers again holds us hypnotized all the way.

Hired to do murder by the gang boss of an unnamed English city, Martin Fallon, cultured Irish adventurer on the run, kills his victim in the cemetery of Holy Name Roman Catholic Church. Despite everything Fallon wins our sympathy. Despite everything he joins forces with Father da Costa, hard-bitten but human scholar-priest, and Father da Costa's beautiful blind niece.

Blood flows, fire blazes, as these incongruous allies make war against Dandy Jack Meehan, the gang boss, and Meehan's vicious young brother, with tension mounting to an unforgettable climax on the scaffolding round the church. If there were any grade higher than A plus, it should be given.

At the outset of Dick Francis's *Blood Sport* (Pocket Books, $1.25) you can predict that "sport" will concern horses and "blood" must be interpreted in a double sense.

But you won't anticipate what happens. After frustrating an attempted murder on the Thames, British Secret Agent Gene Hawkins must discard cloak and dagger to trace certain champion stallions, each worth a fortune, which have mysteriously vanished in America.

Success is impeded by two helpful women, over-young Lynnie as well as over-tipsy Eunice. With roaring adventure which sweeps his hero from Kentucky to a dude ranch farther west, from Nevada to California and back again, Mr. Francis rounds out this perilous kidnapping saga with all his customary expertise and grace of style. *Anglice,* top drawer.

American Gothic, by Robert Bloch (Fawcett, $1.25), centers on a picturesque mass murderer who rears his gimcrack "castle" in the World's Fair Chicago of 1893.

He's all charm-over-cruelty, this fellow. We might find him incredible if "G. Gordon Gregg" in the novel did not so resemble an actual contemporary monster—H.H. Holmes, whose real name was Mudgett—even to his alliterative *nom de guerre.*

Gregg might have gone on slaughtering if he had never met Crystal, our girl reporter. Suspense explodes at last when he seems to have her trapped, and he ends in fiery holocaust on the same night as the fair. Grisly but good.

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a NEW short story by

ROBERT EDWARD ECKELS

In these days of inflation Harry's store offered bread at twenty cents a loaf, six loaves for a dollar. You'd think Harry would sell out every day—with bread selling at the supermarket for more than fifty cents a loaf. But there was a catch to it . . .

THE GREAT BREAD SWINDLE

by ROBERT EDWARD ECKELS

Monday was the first of the month. On Tuesday the figures for the previous month were released. And on Wednesday Harry Carlson got his usual call from the district manager.

"You know why I'm calling, Harry," Budney said. "You saw the figures and you saw where we stood. And all because we're taking a dead loss on your operation. And you know how I feel about that, Harry."

"Mr. Budney," Harry said, "I keep telling you. There are reasons."

"And I keep telling you, Harry, I don't want reasons. I want results." Budney's voice softened. "I had a lot of high hopes for you, Harry," he said. "You remember how we talked when I put you in there about what the future could hold for a bright ambitious young man at Honeyloaf?"

"Yes, sir," Harry said despondently.

"Well, just remember this too, Harry. People who don't live up to their promise don't have any future at all. So if you know what's good for you, you'll get off your duff and get that store showing a profit. Or, by George, I'll get somebody in there who can."

Harry winced as the phone on the other end was banged down. Sighing, he replaced his own receiver with a great deal more care, then got up, left the cubicle that served as his office, and went out into the store proper.

It was empty except for Marcie Fleming at her post behind

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the cash register. She looked at Harry sympathetically. "More trouble, Harry?" she said.

Harry shook his head. "No," he said. "Just the same old one. We're not showing a profit—which makes Budney unhappy. And when he's unhappy, everybody's unhappy."

"That's not fair," Marcie said fiercely. She was a pert blonde, 23 years old and 115 pounds soaking wet. She'd been Harry's assistant six months now and had been hopelessly in love with him since the second day. To her satisfaction, things had progressed to where they had an "understanding." To her disappointment, it was becoming increasingly clear they'd never get beyond that.

Harry shrugged, sighed, and looked around the store. It was a small, rather plain place, crowded with display racks which in turn were piled high with loaves of Honeyloaf bread. Suspended from the ceiling above the racks were large handlettered signs reading uniformly: *20 CENTS EACH—SIX LOAVES FOR A DOLLAR.* Other racks were stocked with Honeycakes, Honeypies, Honeycookies, and other Honeygoodies, all at prices substantially below those normally charged for first-class bakery goods at any respectable supermarket.

Not that the Honey line wasn't first class or Harry's store respectable—in its fashion. The reason for the bargain prices was simply that these particular items were "day-old"—which, of course, is an industry euphemism for "not fresh." By whatever term, though, it was stuff that hadn't sold in its alloted time and the regular deliverymen would pick it up on schedule as they restocked the stores on their routes, then turn it over to Harry to sell at discount. Or try to anyway.

Actually it wasn't a bad idea as ideas go. The bread might be a little drier than when fresh baked but by any other standard it was just as good and by selling it at any price the company got at least some return on what otherwise would be a total loss. The problem was, though, that the *place* to sell it was in the inner city or out in one of the low- or middle-income suburbs, not here in affluent North Shore.

Placing the store here had been Budney's idea. Budney wanted to be Manager of the Year. And you didn't get there, he was fond of pointing out, by letting money you could be making yourself go out of the district. Budney, Harry decided for the umpteenth time, was a fool.

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It was a satisfying thought, but now Marcie called him back to the less-satisfying present. "Harry," she said, "you can't just shrug this off."

"I know," Harry said. The only thing that bothered him about Marcie was that at times she sounded very much like his mother. She went on sounding that way.

"So what are you going to do?"

"Well," Harry said, "the way I see it, I can either stay here and brood. Or I can go out for coffee and brood." He picked a package of doughnuts off a nearby rack. "I think I'll go out for coffee," he said.

And with that he did go out, leaving an exasperated Marcie behind.

That evening, as he did every Wednesday, Harry had dinner at his mother's. As usual the evening started out with a cross-examination.

"You don't look happy, Harry," Mrs. Carlson said. "You and Marcie have a fight or something?"

"No," Harry said, "of course not, Mom."

"That's good." Mrs. Carlson finished setting the table and sat down opposite her son. "You know, Harry," she said, passing him the meat platter, "I can't help but worry about you. Twenty-seven years old and still not settled down. When are you and Marcie going to name the day?"

"When it's time, Mom," Harry said. He speared a pork chop from the platter.

"Sure," Mrs. Carlson said. She frowned as Harry started to put the platter down. "Take another one, Harry. You have to eat if you're going to keep up your strength."

"I eat all right, Mom," Harry said.

"Sure you do," Mrs. Carlson said. "Once a week." She watched until Harry dutifully took a second chop. Then she took the platter back and passed him a large bowl of mashed potatoes. "And speaking of eating," she said, "next time you come bring some of that bread you sell. You know, the twenty-cent kind."

Harry paused with the serving spoon half raised. "I thought you said you only liked bread if it was fresh?"

"That was before it went to fifty-three cents," Mrs. Carlson said. "Honest to God, Harry, I bought a loaf at the supermarket the other day and by the time I got around to using it there wasn't that much difference from that stuff of yours. Not thirty-three cents' worth anyway. Bring some for Mrs. Evans too."

"I will," Harry said. He was

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so impressed he took a larger helping of mashed potatoes than he'd intended.

The impression lasted, and the next morning he mentioned the incident twice, first to Marcie, then later to Murphy the deliveryman when he brought the day's quota of leftover bread and cakes. "It's inflation," Harry said as he helped Murphy unload his truck, "finally catching up with North Shore. First the older people, then the housewives."

"You think so, Harry?" Murphy said.

Harry shrugged. "I don't know," he said. "Maybe two swallows don't make a summer, but I sure hope so."

Murphy looked at him pityingly. "Did you ever stop to think why all the regular drivers passed up this—uh—promotion of yours, Harry? It was because they were all smart enough to realize that you couldn't win here no matter what happened. So maybe people do start buying from you. All that means is they're buying less at retail. And what do you think our ever-loving district manager will do when that happens? Take three guesses."

Harry needed only one, and his face showed it. Because one of the main considerations in locating the store here was that there were no retailers handling Honeyloaf in the immediate neighborhood.

Murphy clapped him commiseratingly on the shoulder. "If you're smart," he said, "you'll quit before they fire you. It looks better on the record."

Left to his own decision, Harry would have probably done just that. But before he could make up his mind, fate or luck or maybe pure blind chance handed him a reprieve. Of a sort, that is. Because two days later Harry slipped on a wet spot on his kitchen floor, tried to catch himself as he fell, and as a result was laid up for weeks with a badly wrenched back.

When he finally got back to work it was the first of the month again. For some reason, though, the day came and went without the usual phone call from Budney. At first Harry thought it was consideration for his recent accident. But then he got a look at the profit-and-loss figures and learned better.

For the first time the store had begun to show a profit. A small one, it was true, but black ink just the same. Better still, there was no matching drop off in the district's retail sales.

"I don't know what you did," he said to Marcie, "but if you promise to keep it up I'll prom-

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ise to take off more often."

Marcie started to sniffle.

"Hey," Harry said, "there's no reason to cry."

"I'be nod crying," Marcie said. "I hab a code."

"That's awful," Harry said. "You ought to be home in bed. I mean it. Take the rest of the day off."

Marcie started to refuse, but then a sneeze interrupted, and in the end she agreed and left for the day.

Which is why Harry happened to be tending the cash register when Chestnut came in.

Not that Harry knew he was Chestnut at the time. All he saw was a small furtive-looking man in a leather jacket and cloth cap glancing apprehensively around the store.

"Where's Marcie?" the man said at last.

"Miss Fleming's sick," Harry said.

"Oh? Who are you then?"

"I'm the manager," Harry said. "Now, look—"

"Oh," the small man said again, but in a completely different tone of voice. "You must be Harry. Yeah, Marcie talked about you a lot." He pointed to himself. "I'm Chestnut," he said. "I came for the order."

Harry looked at him blankly.

"I got a standing order. Didn't Marcie tell you?"

"No," Harry said, "she didn't."

"Don't tell me you're sold out?"

Harry shook his head.

"Whew," Chestnut said. "You had me worried there for a minute. Once before I was a little late getting in and Marcie had to short me twenty-five loaves. You can guess what a sweat that was. Anyway, that's when I went to the standing order. Safer."

"Much," Harry agreed dubiously. "Uh, just how much do you want?"

"A hundred loaves white," Chestnut said, suddenly crisp and businesslike. "And forty-five rye. You got any pumpernickel?"

"Some."

"Gimme twenty of those then. No, better make it fifteen."

Harry nodded, still not sure what he was agreeing to, but agreeing anyway. Then he went off to fill the small man's order.

It took more than several trips to the stockroom but finally Harry had it all together, ringing up the sale and then helping Chestnut carry the bread out to his car, a three-year-old station wagon with no identifying marks or signs.

When Harry went back into the store, a second man in a leather jacket almost identical to Chestnut's stood by the cash

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register. "Where's Marcie?" the stranger said.

"Marcie," Harry said, "for God's sake, who *are* these men?"

It was two days later. Marcie was back on the job but still sniffling. She touched a crumpled tissue to her nose. "What men?" she said.

"Little men in leather jackets," Harry said. "A steady stream of them regular as streetcars, and they all know you by name."

"Oh," Marcie said. "Those men." She shrugged. "They aren't anybody, Harry. They're just men who buy bread here, that's all."

"That's all!" Harry said. "Marcie, those men cleaned us out yesterday. And the day before that too. They'll probably clean us out again today."

"Of course they will," Marcie said. "But that's what we're in business for, isn't it? To sell bread." She gave Harry a long curious look. When he had no comeback she touched the tissue to her nose again as if to say that as far as she was concerned that was the end of that.

Harry probably wouldn't have left it there because he didn't like puzzles. But right after that Marcie's men—as he'd come to think of them—started coming in and he got so involved taking care of them that he never got back to it. In fact, it wasn't until he was closing up for the night that he remembered it was Wednesday and that he'd forgotten to set aside any bread for his mother.

The bread shelves were empty now, but fortunately Saul Dubrow's convenience food store across the street was still open and rather than show up empty-handed Harry crossed over to the small grocery and picked up a couple of loaves of Honeyloaf.

Saul's youngest daughter-in-law was tending the cash register. She looked at Harry curiously as he plumped the two loaves down on the checkout counter. "Talk about coals to Newcastle," she said.

"Just checking the competition." Harry accepted his change—a dime and four one-dollar bills from a five—declined a bag and left with his purchases.

He was halfway to his mother's before it hit him.

The next morning Harry waited until he saw the bread delivery truck leave. Then he crossed over again to the small grocery. As he had hoped, this time Saul himself was in the store.

Harry came straight to the point. "Since when did you

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start carrying Honeyloaf, Saul?"

Saul shrugged. He was a tall spare man in his mid-60's with a lugubrious face and thin graying hair. "A couple of weeks now," he said. "Ever since one your drivers stopped by and made me an offer I couldn't refuse."

"You're sure it was one of our drivers?"

"He said he was," Saul said. "Should I have questioned him?"

"Maybe you should have, Saul," Harry said. "Because it must have been quite a bargain he offered you if it lets you resell eight cents cheaper than the supermarkets. Didn't that make you suspicious at all?"

"Of course it did," Saul said. "I wasn't born yesterday and I haven't beaten a supermarket price since they invented them. But he had an explanation. Something to do with expanded production and lower unit costs."

"And you believed it?"

"Frankly, Harry," Saul said, "no. I figured the real gimmick was to get me hooked and then raise the price. But I thought why not? When he talks higher price I can always say, 'No, thanks, but it's been nice knowin' you.'" The older man shrugged again. "I have to admit, though, so far he hasn't even mentioned a higher price."

"And he won't either," Harry said. "Because what's happening, Saul, is you're being taken. A bunch of sharpies are buying my discount bread and then reselling it to people like you as fresh."

"That's crazy, Harry," Saul said. "You don't think after all these years in the business I wouldn't know if somebody was passing stale bread off on me? Particularly, as you say, somebody who was offering me a bargain?"

"As a matter of fact," Harry said, "you probably wouldn't. Because you can't tell any more just by squeezing, not with all the preservatives they pump into everything. But there is a way if you know where to look."

He picked up a loaf from the display counter. "They put a little colored mark on all the wrappers as a freshness code. It's how the deliverymen know when to replace. And if you look right here it tells you—" Harry's voice trailed off.

Saul raised an eyebrow. "Tells you what, Harry?" he said.

"It's today's bread," Harry said slowly. "It's fresh bread."

"Don't give up so easily, Harry," Saul said. "Maybe they're counterfeiting wrappers as well."

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Harry shook his head absently. "They couldn't," he said. "It would be too expensive."

"So where's the crime then, Mr. Detective?"

Harry shook his head again. "I'm damned if I know," he said.

But now he was more determined than ever to find out, and on Friday he called Marcie at the store to tell her he wouldn't be in. A doctor's appointment, he said, to have his back checked—an appointment he'd forgotten to mention earlier. He didn't like lying to Marcie, but he wanted her to behave normally when her customers started coming in, and he didn't think she'd be able to if she knew what he really had in mind. Which was to drive down to the store, pick a spot about half a block away, park, wait.

Luckily he didn't have to wait long. Less than half an hour after he'd settled himself in, Chestnut's familiar station wagon pulled up in front of the store. When it pulled out again, laden with its usual stock of bread, Harry followed.

It was the first time Harry had ever tried to tail a car without the other driver knowing it. But luckily again there wasn't much traffic and the small man drove with almost singleminded directness, turning twice and then pulling into a large double garage set well back on a side street.

Harry drove past slowly. Chestnut was already out of the station wagon and closing the garage doors, which prevented Harry from seeing anything inside. But the small man gave no sign he'd recognized Harry. So Harry went on down to the end of the street, made a tight, illegal U-turn, and settled down to wait once more.

Twenty minutes later he was rewarded. The garage doors opened and a truck drove out.

"It was like a bad dream," Harry said. "I followed that truck from store to store until we'd covered every supermarket in that part of town." It was later in the day and Harry was back at the store, sitting at his desk and talking to Marcie who leaned sober-faced against the doorjamb.

"Why a *bad* dream, Harry?" she said.

"Don't you understand?" Harry said. "That was a Honeyloaf truck I followed. Those men who 'buy bread' here. They're company deliverymen, every one of them. And they've got a beautiful little swindle worked out. They pick up their bread at the bakery every morning, just like they're supposed to. But instead of deliver-

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ing it where they're supposed to, they sell it to small-store owners like Saul. Then they come here and buy our bread to use on their regular routes.

"And it works, because they're so well known there that everybody just takes them for granted. You know, you see your regular route man restocking the store and you just naturally assume he's putting in fresh and taking out old because that's what he's always done. But this time he isn't. He's just substituting one batch of old bread for another. And it's foolproof.

"Or almost foolproof," he amended grimly, reaching for the phone.

Marcie sighed. "I was afraid you'd take this attitude, Harry. That's why I didn't tell you."

Harry's hand stopped short of the receiver. "What do you mean," he said, "you didn't tell me before? Marcie! Did you know about this?"

The girl nodded. "Actually," she said, "I'm afraid it was even sort of my idea. Mr. Murphy was helping me one day while you were out and, well, one thing just led to another."

"Oh, God!" Harry said. "Marcie, it's *dishonest.*"

"Is it really, Harry? I mean, *really?* Oh, I know, we profit and so do the drivers. But who's hurt? Not the company for sure. They're selling more bread and making more money than ever—although admittedly they don't understand quite why. Not Saul or any of the other small-store owners either. And the supermarkets haven't complained, Harry. Neither have any of their customers. So they can't be hurting too badly if they don't even know it's happening to them."

Harry just shook his head. Marcie looked at him earnestly. "Listen, Harry," she said, "I had to do something! Otherwise we'd have had an 'understanding' for the rest of our lives."

"Marcie—" Harry began. He took a deep breath. "Marcie," he began again. The phone rang, and Harry picked it up quickly, glad of the interruption. "We'll talk about this later," he said to Marcie, who turned and ran from the room. Harry sighed and put the receiver to his ear. "Hello," he said.

"Harry," Budney said. The district manager was fairly bubbling. "You'll never guess what happened, Harry. J. K.—the big man himself—asked me into his office for an advance look at this month's figures. Because we're Number One, Harry. And you know why."

"I have an idea," Harry said carefully.

"Even J. K. commented on it, Harry," Budney said. "A re-

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markable turnaround, he called it. You didn't let me down, Harry, and I'm not going to let you down either. There's going to be a little something extra in that pay envelope from now on. No, don't thank me, Harry. Just keep that profit showing—and growing."

"Mr. Budney," Harry said, "about that profit. . ."

"Yes, Harry? What about it?"

"Well," Harry said. "Well, you know, things aren't always what they seem—"

"Look, Harry," Budney said, and now he had changed back to the old, familiar Budney again, "they had better be what they seem or—well, let me put it this way. You just keep on doing what you're doing and everything's going to be just fine. But if you mess me up now—if you lose me Manager of the Year—well, we've talked about that before, haven't we, Harry, and I don't have to tell you what would happen then, do I? So what's it going to be, Harry?"

Harry looked up. Marcie had come back to lean against the doorjamb again. She was smiling and Harry had the distinct impression she'd been listening on the store extension. "Well, Harry?" she said. "What's it going to be?"

Harry turned back to the phone. "Whatever you say, Mr. Budney."

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a NEW Raffles adventure-memoir by

BARRY PEROWNE

We hope you did not miss Barry Perowne's "Raffles: The Enigma of the Admiral's Hat," in our 34th Anniversary Issue (March 1975). It related the memorable encounter between E. W. Hornung's Raffles, the Amateur Cracksman, and A. Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, in which Dr. Doyle, the detective, vanquished Raffles, the thief. As a result, the proud gentleman-crook, Raffles, had a score to settle if he was to regain his self-respect.

Well, here is the story of that settled account, in which one of the most famous criminals of fiction becomes a sleuth in order to save the life of the most famous fictional detective. And needless to remind you, Raffles manages to combine business with the pleasure of restoring his self-esteem—by finding an opportunity to ply his own trade . . .

RAFFLES ON THE TRAIL OF THE HOUND

by BARRY PEROWNE

"I wonder if by any chance, Mr. Raffles, you're one of those discriminating people who may be described, perhaps, as Sherlockians?"

The question was tossed suddenly at A. J. Raffles by Mr. Greenhough Smith, distinguished editor of England's leading monthly periodical, *The Strand Magazine.*

It was a morning in dubious springtime, and a fitful sun shone in through the windows of Mr. Smith's editorial sanctum in Southampton Street, just off London's busy Strand.

Mr. Smith had invited Raffles, England's best-known cricketer, to contribute an article on the game, and dropping in on Mr.

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Smith to discuss the matter, Raffles had brought me along with him.

Knowing what I knew about the least suspected side of Raffles' life, the criminal side, I felt uncomfortable when Mr. Smith, agreement having been reached with Raffles for the cricket article, asked his unexpected question.

"Why, yes, Mr. Smith," Raffles replied, at ease in a saddlebag chair, his suit immaculate, a pearl in his cravat, his dark hair crisp, his keen face tanned. "I think Bunny Manders and I can claim to be—shall we say—amateur Sherlockians. Eh, Bunny?"

"Certainly, Raffles," I murmured uneasily, taking my cue from him and accepting a Sullivan from his proffered cigarette-case.

"You may be interested, then," said Mr. Greenhough Smith, "to note this big basketful of letters on my desk. They're just a small part of the mail that's been flooding in from readers of Dr. Conan Doyle's latest tale, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. It's the twenty-sixth published adventure of Sherlock Holmes. Its first instalment appeared last year, in *The Strand Magazine* for August 1901. Its eighth and final instalment is in the current issue—practically vanished already from the bookstalls. You may have been reading the tale?"

"Bunny Manders and I consider it," said Raffles, "the most enthralling Holmes adventure that's so far appeared."

"An opinion, to judge from these letters," said Mr. Smith, "concurred in by most readers—with one curious exception."

The jingle of passing hansoms was faintly audible from Southampton Street as Mr. Smith, polishing his scholarly glasses, frowned at a letter that lay open before him on his blotting-pad.

"You know, Mr. Raffles," he went on, "Dr. Doyle was asked recently if he'd based the character of Sherlock Holmes on any real-life original. He replied that he had had in mind a preceptor of his undergraduate days at Edinburgh University, a certain Dr. Joseph Bell. On being told of this, Dr. Bell smiled. He said that Dr. Doyle's kind remembrance of his old teacher had made much of very little and that the real-life Sherlock Holmes is, in fact, Dr. Conan Doyle himself."

My palms moistened with embarrassment, for Raffles and I knew from personal experience that Dr. Joseph Bell's remark was only too true. Back at a time when Dr. Conan Doyle had been an obscure medical practitioner in the naval town of Portsmouth and had published, to no great acclaim, only the first of his Sherlock

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Holmes tales, *A Study in Scarlet,* Raffles and I had had an encounter with Dr. Doyle and had nearly gone to prison as a result.

Now here in Mr. Greenhough Smith's editorial sanctum twenty-five Sherlock Holmes tales later, with the great detective and his creator known the world over, the conversation had taken a turn I found distinctly disquieting.

But Raffles merely tapped ash casually from his cigarette and said, "To amateur Sherlockians, Dr. Joseph Bell's remark provides food for thought, Mr. Smith."

"Of late," Mr. Smith said, "Dr. Doyle's own great investigative ability has been concentrated on a challenge of the times we live in. As you may know, on the success of the Holmes tales, he abandoned medicine for literature. However, when the recent regrettable war with the Boers broke out, he abandoned literature for medicine—in order to serve in South Africa with the Langman Field Hospital. That photograph of him was taken at the time."

Among the framed drawings and signed photographs on the walls of Mr. Smith's Sanctum was the original, I saw now, of an illustration for *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* depicting Sherlock Holmes, in deerstalker cap and Inverness cape, firing his revolver at the apparition of a gigantic hound charging with lambent eyes and slavering jaws out of the fog of a Dartmoor night.

Beside this illustration of the fictional Holmes hung a photograph of his creator, the real-life Sherlock Holmes. Big, burly, bushy-moustached, wearing khaki fatigues and a sun-helmet and smoking a Boer curved pipe, he was shown standing, a stalwart, uncompromising figure, against a background of Red Cross bell-tents on the parched South African *veld.*

"You may have met Dr. Doyle out there?" Mr. Smith asked.

"As Yeomanry subalterns for the duration, Bunny Manders and I served in a different sector," said Raffles, naturally making no mention of our Portsmouth encounter with Dr. Doyle, which had occurred years before the Boer War.

"Now that peace has been restored," said Mr. Smith, "Dr. Doyle has felt it his duty to investigate foreign allegations, not made by the Boers themselves, that the British used dum-dum bullets and committed other transgressions. As a doctor who had a good many Boer prisoners, wounded and sick, pass through his hands, he saw no evidence to support the allegations. He considers them to emanate from tainted sources with a vested interest in maintaining discord among nations."

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"The traffickers in armaments," said Raffles.

"Exactly! And our government," said Mr. Smith, "apparently considering it beneath its dignity to heed such allegations, Dr. Doyle has undertaken the task of investigation himself, at great personal expense of time and money. He has, nowadays, a world-wide audience. He feels a duty to it and to the cause of Peace, for he knows that when he speaks it's with a voice known to the world—the voice of Sherlock Holmes."

"Quite so," said Raffles.

"Dr. Doyle has gathered his documented evidence in rebuttal," said Mr. Smith, "in a book he calls *The South African War: Its Cause and Conduct,* written without fee and printed far below cost by a sympathetic publisher. With the object of financing the translation of the book into many languages and its printing and world-wide distribution, gratis, a Fund has been opened for the receipt of contributions—"

"A Fund?" said Raffles, his grey eyes alert.

"A 'War Book Fund,'" said Mr. Smith, "administered by Dr. Doyle's own bank—and also, you may recall, as Sherlockians, Holmes's bank—the Capital and Counties, Oxford Street branch. Of course, this great task which Dr. Doyle has taken upon his broad shoulders leaves him no time for fiction. In fact, he tells me he intends *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to be his last Holmes tale—which is bad news, of course, for the writers of all these letters. Strange as it may seem, I dare not bother him with them in his present mood—which is a pity, because there's one here in particular that—"

He broke off and called, "Come in!"

The door opened to admit a tall young man, meticulously frock-coated, with a high collar and clean-cut, intellectual features.

"My Assistant Editor," said Mr. Smith, introducing us and handing the newcomer a sheaf of page proofs. "You want these for Mr. W. W. Jacobs? Very well, they can go off to him now. We mustn't keep humorists waiting. By the way, I was thinking of getting Mr. Raffles' impression of that letter from Dartmoor."

"It's a hoax, Mr. Smith," said the Assistant Editor firmly. "It's another humorist at work—an unlicenced one. It's be a mistake to bother Dr. Doyle with it, especially at this time. An impudent hoax would not only annoy Dr. Doyle, it'd just about put the lid on his determination to write no more Holmes tales. Gentlemen, if you'll excuse me—"

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With a brisk nod to Raffles and myself, the Assistant Editor, obviously busy, left us.

"He's probably right about this letter," said Mr. Smith, as the door closed. "It came in this morning, in an envelope postmarked Bovey Tracey. That's a small town—the 'Coombe Tracey' of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*—on the edge of Dartmoor. No harm in getting a fresh eye cast on this letter. As a man of the world, Mr. Raffles, what d'you make of this?"

I read the letter, amateurishly typewritten on a machine with a faded blue ribbon, over Raffles' shoulder:

Dartmoor,
Devonshire.
27th March 1902

The Editor,
The Strand Magazine,
London.

Sir,

As a resident in the Dartmoor area, scene of *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* now concluded in the current issue of your magazine, I have read the narrative with particular interest.

Your author, A. Conan Doyle, has based his tale on the case, well known in this area since 1677, of Sir Richard Cabell, Lord of the Manor of Brooke in the parish of Buckfastleigh. This evil-living baronet, in the act of raping a virgin, had his throat torn out by an avenging hound, which then, according to legend, took on phantom form, to range evermore upon Dartmoor.

Your author has adapted the legend to his own purpose, making the Phantom Hound "the curse of the Baskervilles" and skilfully using the topography and certain phenomena of Dartmoor to lend his tale verisimilitude. Among such phenomena mentioned by him are strange nocturnal howlings sometimes heard, as indeed of some huge hound baying the moon. Sceptics attribute these sounds to natural causes—the wind in the rocks of the moorland tors, or the slow upwelling and escape of vegetable gas from the depths of the treacherous Dartmoor mires, such as the Fox Tor morass which your author chooses to call "the great Grimpen Mire."

These sounds, and other phenomena mentioned in his tale, have never in fact been satisfactorily explained. I had hoped that your

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author might advance some theory to account for them. I now find, however, that he is content to end his tale with Mr. Sherlock Holmes destroying the "phantom hound" with five shots from a revolver, proving the beast to be mortal and doctored with phosphorescent paste in order for an evildoer to secure an inheritance by chicanery.

Sir, I must confess to a slight sense of disappointment, and I feel constrained to describe to you a recent experience of my own.

As something of a folklorist, I have cultivated the acquaintance, for the sake of his unique knowledge of the moor, of a certain local deer-poacher, sheep-stealer, all-around ne'er-do-well. I am, frankly, ashamed of my furtive association with the man. However, he came stealing one night to my back door not long ago. His poacher's sawed-off shotgun had been confiscated.

He begged the loan of my twelve-bore and a handful of cartridges. For some time, I gathered, a lurcher-like bitch he owned, a rangy, grizzly-grey beast he called Skaur, had been wild on the moor. Trouble was now brewing over sheep wantonly hamstrung and other depredations. The police were on the look-out for the culprit—Skaur, my acquaintance was certain, though he had long ago given it out that the bitch was dead and buried. If the police now got her and proved his ownership, it would mean gaol for him, as he could not pay the fines and damages.

He was in such a panic to down Skaur before the police did so that I lent him my gun. About a week later, he appeared again one night at my door, a deeply shaken man. He had sighted Skaur, shot her, and crippled her. Following her blood trail, he found her laired among the rocks. She lay panting, bloodstained, with three grizzly-grey whelps so savagely at her dugs that she was like to be eaten while yet alive.

As he crouched, peering into the lair in the failing daylight and howling wind, some instinct made him look round. He swears that, stealing towards him, was a creature, big as a pony, shadowy—some species of enormous hound. He shot at it, wildly—and the apparition was gone.

The fellow was in such a state when he came to me that it was all I could do to get him, the following day, to take me on the long, rough trudge across some of the worst parts of Dartmoor to the alleged lair.

It exists. Skaur lay there dead, ripped and torn by her own

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whelps. Sir, I have never seen on canine pelts such curious markings as those on these savage creatures. I have penned them into the lair and, at considerable inconvenience, kept them alive. Curious as to their sire, I have maintained long vigils at the lair by day and night, but have caught no glimpse of the creature described by my ne'er-do-well acquaintance, though I have heard, on two occasions, a distant, grievous, hound-like howling—but no conclusion, of course, can be drawn from that nocturnal phenomenon.

I can devote no further time to this matter. I intend to shoot the whelps. I have no desire, as you will appreciate, for my association with my unsavoury acquaintance to become known. I must guard my local good repute—and hence maintain my anonymity in this matter. However, I will make this much concession: If your author should wish to view the strange whelps, he should insert forthwith, in the Personal column of the daily *Devon & Cornwall Gazette,* an announcement to this effect: 'Sirius—instructions awaited.'

There will then be mailed to your office a map of Dartmoor with, clearly marked upon it, the precise location of the lair of the strange whelps. What your author may then choose to do about them, should he look into the matter, will be his responsibility, not mine.

In the event of no announcement appearing, as specified above, by 7th April, I shall carry out the intention I have expressed in this notification.

Meantime, I have the honour to be, Sir, yours truly,

SIRIUS

"Well, Mr. Raffles?" said Mr. Greenhough Smith, as Raffles returned the letter to him.

"A hoax, obviously," Raffles said. "Eh, Bunny?"

"Undoubtedly, Raffles," I said.

"How well, Mr. Smith," Raffles asked, glancing at the illustration of the fictional Sherlock Holmes and the photograph of the real-life Sherlock Holmes, on the wall, "is Dr. Doyle actually acquainted with Dartmoor?"

"He spent a few days there, researching for *The Hound of the Baskervilles,*" said Mr. Smith, "at just about this time last year. He was with his friend, Mr. Fletcher Robinson, of Ipplepen, Devonshire, who knows Dartmoor well and told Dr. Doyle of the

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legend of the Phantom Hound which inspired his *Baskerville* tale. You know, I'm sorry—in a way—that you consider this letter a hoax. I had just a faint hope that, if I let Dr. Doyle see it, it might kindle a spark in his creative mind—and result perhaps in a sequel to *The Hound of the Baskervilles.*"

"I'm afraid," Raffles said, with a smile, "it would be more likely to annoy him, as your Assistant Editor remarked."

"Common sense tells me you're right, of course. Ah, well!" Mr. Smith put the letter, rather reluctantly, into a drawer of his desk and became business-like. "Now, Mr. Raffles, about a delivery date for your cricket article—"

A date readily agreed upon by Raffles, we took our leave.

"I suppose that, as usual when you get an invitation to write about cricket, Raffles," I said, as we sauntered down Southampton Street, "you expect me, as a one-time journalist, to ghost-write this article for you?"

"Why else, except for you to hear Mr. Smith's briefing for it, would I have brought you with me this morning, Bunny? Innocent appearances in print are useful cover for—shall we say—less innocent activities. But literary toil's more your cup of tea than mine, though it would have been impolitic to mention your spectral function to Mr. Smith."

"I appreciate that," I said. "I'm not complaining. I just feel, seeing that the throes of composition fall upon me, that you might have held out for a later delivery date."

"You'll manage, Bunny," said Raffles absently. "Dartmoor air will stimulate your muse."

"Dartmoor air?" I stopped dead. "Why should we go to Dartmoor?"

Raffles gave me a strange look.

"To see a man about a dog, Bunny—if we can find him!"

In the first-class smoking compartment we had to ourselves in the train going down to Devonshire next day, Raffles explained his reasoning to me.

"Dr. Doyle's probably long ago forgotten our Portsmouth encounter with him, Bunny, but I never have. I made a humiliating mistake on that occasion. He detected it. I respect that man. The figure I cut in his eyes on that Portsmouth occasion is something I can't forget till I've levelled the score with him. If I could do him a service, even though he may never know of it, I'd feel—in my

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own mind—that I'd settled an account long outstanding to my own self-respect. And I could turn the page and forget."

A heavy shower lashed the train windows.

"Raffles," I said uneasily, "we'd be well advised to let sleeping dogs lie."

"Every instinct tells me, Bunny, that the dog in that 'Sirius' letter is very wide-awake. I think that letter's an attempt to set a trap. I think 'Sirius' is a man with a mission. I think he's a running dog of those 'tainted sources' who'd like to stop the translation and free world-wide distribution of Dr. Doyle's book disproving their mischief-making allegations. He carries that whole project on his own shoulders. Remove Dr. Doyle, in some way that would appear mere accident, and the world-wide project would die on the vine, and, incidentally, the career of the fictional Sherlock Holmes would end with the career of the real-life one."

"Who," I argued, "being what we know him to be, would be as quick as you are to suspect a trap in that letter!"

"Of course he would, Bunny. And, being the man he is, he might decide—if he saw that letter—to track down 'Sirius' himself. That's why I told Mr. Greenhough Smith I thought the letter a hoax. 'Sirius' thought, of course, that the letter would be passed on immediately to Dr. Doyle. 'Sirius' couldn't know what we know, which is that Mr. Smith was in two minds about it—an editorial predicament. *We* don't want Dr. Doyle to see that letter, Bunny, because *we* want to be the ones to kennel 'Sirius'!"

"How?"

"He has a weak spot, Bunny. His whole letter proclaims it. He's a Sherlockian!"

I stared. The train rat-tatted along, vibrating, through the wind-blown rain. Raffles offered me a Sullivan from his case.

"Consider what's probably happened, Bunny. Assume 'Sirius' to be a man briefed to queer Dr. Doyle's pitch. Seeking ways and means to get at him, 'Sirius' reads *The Hound of the Baskervilles*—with its vivid descriptions of the natural hazards of Dartmoor. Where most likely, thinks 'Sirius,' for Dr. Doyle to meet with a fatal accident than among the scenes of his own tale—if somehow he could be lured there?"

My heart began to thump.

"If I'm right," said Raffles, "the idea of a trap probably began to shape in the mind of 'Sirius' as he finished his reading of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*—the end of which, he says, 'disap-

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pointed' him. It's highly unlikely that the man is, in fact, a Dartmoor resident. So what would he do?"

"Reconnoitre the area himself," I said, "to decide just where and how he could best contrive a trap."

"Furthermore, Bunny, he'd want to find out just how familiar Dr. Doyle really is with the area. 'Sirius' would probably ask a question here and there, to find out if Dr. Doyle had personally explored Dartmoor and, if so, how extensively. So—what are you and I to look for?"

"An inquisitive stranger!"

"Asking questions, Bunny, within—probably—the past couple of weeks, because the current issue of *The Strand Magazine,* containing the end of the *Baskerville* tale, only became available about then. No, Bunny, 'Sirius' shouldn't be hard to find. He's like you and me—a deviant Sherlockian."

"Deviant?"

"Avowed Sherlockians, Bunny, are interested in the *fictional* Sherlock Holmes. You and I are interested in tracing the footsteps of the real-life Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Doyle. So, I suspect, is 'Sirius.' Now, as Mr. Greenhough Smith told us, Dr. Doyle *did* visit Dartmoor almost exactly a year ago. If we can find out who's been sniffing, just recently, to pick up a scent of Doyle on Dartmoor, we'll have discovered the prowling hound, the deviant Sherlockian—'Sirius.' And here, by the look of it," Raffles added, "is our first glimpse of the moor coming up."

The daylight was fading. Bleak hills swept by wind and rain loomed in the distance—the outlying bastions of Dartmoor with its sombre tors and quaking morasses, its neolithic hut circles and notorious prison. As I peered through the train window at those brooding sentinel hills, my own reading of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* gave me a haunting sense of having been here before—in the company of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, and the menaced Sir Henry Baskerville.

After changing to a local train, Raffles and I arrived that night at Lydford Station and put up at an inn under Black Down on the moor's edge.

"Dr. Conan Doyle?" said the landlady, in reply to Raffles' inquiry. "In these parts this time last year? No, sir, I don't recolleck any Dr. Doyle."

"Have you had any visitors during the last couple of weeks?" Raffles asked.

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"No, sir, you're the first for many a month. Dartmoor gets visitors in the summer, more. Mostly they like to see the Sepulchre—which is the tomb of Sir Richard Cabell, 'im as was Lord o' the Manor, wenching and carrying on in 'is prime, over Buckfastleigh way. Ended up with 'is throat tore out by the 'Ound that turned phantom, as is well known in these parts."

Raffles and I exchanged a glance.

"There's a key'ole in the door of Sir Richard's tomb," said the landlady, "an' to this day, if you pokes yer finger through, 'is skeleton'll up an' gnaw at it."

"There are mysteries on Dartmoor, Missus," agreed Raffles, "and you'll join us in a nightcap to steady us. What'll you take?"

"Just a small port-and-peppermint," said Missus graciously.

All next day Raffles was out on the moor on a hired hunter, seeking word of Dr. Doyle's visit to these parts a year ago. The weather was vile, and I was not sorry that my duty as Raffles' "ghost" kept me indoors by the snuggery fire, working on his cricket article while the wind wuthered in the thatched and dripping eaves.

As the wan daylight faded and Missus brought the lamp in, lighted, and drew closed the snuggery curtains against the howling dark, there still was no sign of Raffles. It was a night when one could believe in the Phantom Hound, a night for it to be abroad on the desolate moor. I began to grow anxious. But, at last, Raffles returned, soaked to the skin. And when he had changed, and Missus set before us on the snuggery table a great round of beef and a foaming jug of nut-brown ale drawn from the wood, I was left alone with him, and I asked how he had got on.

"Not badly, Bunny," he said. "I made a start at Bovey Tracey, on the far side of the moor. That's the 'Coombe Tracey' of *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* and I struck what we're seeking—the trail behind the tale." He began, obviously famished, to carve the juicy sirloin, perfectly roast. "Dr. Conan Doyle's remembered at Bovey Tracey, both he and his friend Mr. Fletcher Robinson. Two big, genial, moustached gentlemen, Bunny, making a holiday of their explorations on Dartmoor for Dr. Doyle's tale of the Hound."

"What about 'Sirius'?"

"Not a sniff, as yet, of that inquisitive Sherlockian. I'll get his scent to-morrow, with luck. After you with the horseradish, Bunny."

But it was not until our fourth night at the Black Down inn

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that Raffles returned from his own explorations with a glint in his eyes that I knew well.

"Got him, Bunny! I picked up his scent at Widecombe-in-the-Moor. I had the luck to fall into conversation with the Vicar there—elderly man, a devoted Sherlockian himself. He told me about a man who'd called at the Vicarage about ten days ago—a tall, lean, mean-eyed individual, a stranger to the Vicar, who said there was something about the look of the chap that made him think of some lines the poet Shelley once wrote. The old Vicar quoted them to me:

"I met Murder on the way.
He had a mask like Castlereagh.
Very grey he looked and grim.
Seven bloodhounds followed him."

"My God, Raffles!" I breathed.

"Apparently," Raffles said, "he told the Vicar he was a book-dealer visiting country houses and would give a good price for any first editions they might care to part with—such as first editions of Dr. Conan Doyle's books. A good gambit, Bunny, to start asking if Dr. Doyle was known to have visited the area."

"It's 'Sirius,' for a certainty!"

"You can lay to that. But there are only *two* bloodhounds following him—you and me, Bunny. And the scent's now hot and rank, because the old Vicar told me he recognised the horse the fellow was riding—a hack hired from an inn called Rowe's Duchy Hotel at Princetown."

"That's where that damnable prison is, Raffles."

"The highest point on Dartmoor, Bunny—Princetown. And we'll shift our base to there in the morning."

In the night, the wind dropped. The weather changed. We hired a dogcart from Missus. Raffles took the reins. Under a leaden sky, we clattered along the potholed road to Princetown. A strange stillness brooded over the moor, its desolation relieved here and there by great, smooth patches of green among the rocks and heather—the deceptive, inviting green of the deadly quagmires. The distant tors loomed up, strange and jagged in the distance, out of a growing hint of mist.

Suddenly, on that lonely road, we came upon a grisly procession—a shuffling file of convicts in knickerbockers and tunics stamped with broad arrows. Under a strong escort of blue-uniformed Civil Guards armed with carbines and fixed bayonets,

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Britain's born losers trudged along with picks and shovels over their shoulders, their sullen, shaved heads sunk on their chests.

"There, Bunny," Raffles muttered, "but for the grace of God—"

I knocked on wood as our dogcart clattered on past. And, about lunchtime, there loomed up ahead of us the house of a thousand hatreds, the most notorious of penitentiaries, its great, gaunt complex of buildings towering starkly over the squat little cluster of dwellings, Princetown, isolated under the gunmetal sky.

"Caution's our watchword, Bunny," Raffles said, as he reined in our horse before the long, low, stone-built inn that faced the prison across a deep dip in the moor. "We'll feel out the ground."

We found the landlord behind his counter in the Bar Parlour. A stout man in his shirtsleeves, with an oiled cowlick of hair, he was polishing the shove-ha'p'ny board. He gave us good-day and Raffles ordered a Scotch-and-soda for each of us.

"See any lags on the road?" a voice asked.

We turned from the bar. There was one other customer present, sitting on a settle by the window. Lean, tall, powerfully built, gaunt of face, with a mean, tight mouth under a small, wax-pointed, sergeant-major type moustache, he wore a buttoned-up frockcoat and a bowler.

"Yes," Raffles said, "we saw a group."

"Being marched in from the stone quarries, huh? At this hour? That means there's fog coming up."

The man drained his tankard, mopped his moustache with a red bandanna handkerchief, stood up and, with a curt nod to the landlord, went out.

"Have a drink yourself, landlord," said Raffles.

"Thank 'ee, sir—just a small nip o' gin, then, to give me an appetite. You gents on holiday?"

"Snatching a few days from the treadmill," said Raffles. "Like that gentleman, perhaps, who just went out?"

"Well, no, sir, that's—but I better not mention his name, he likes to keep it quiet." The landlord glanced around, lowered his voice. "Between ourselves, gents, he's the Man with the Cat."

I stared. We had come to Dartmoor to see a man about a dog.

"The Man with the Cat?" said Raffles.

The landlord nodded. "It's not like the bad old days, sir, when it was done 'ap'azard. We're in a new century now. When a lag's ordered strokes nowadays, it has to be done civilized. So the Man with the Cat comes down from the Prison Commissioners in Lon-

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don to do it. He brings the Cat-o'-Nine-Tails in proper hygienic wrappings. He has to do the job within a prescribed time of the lag bein' sentenced, to avoid mental anguish, and lay the Cat on for the best effect—scientific.

"He lodges with me for a night or two when he comes down on 'is business. If 'e lodges in the prison, the lags seem to smell 'e's arrived. They catcalls all night, yowling *miaouw miaouw* like a thousand randy toms on the roof, to keep him from sleepin'. They kick up a hell of a shindy, to sap 'is strength. The man's a bit too much in love with 'is work, for my taste. I gets a lodgin' allowance for him from the Commission, but I can't say I like the man."

"I'm sure," said Raffles. "Landlord, I think we'll have another drink. Is that gentleman your only guest just now?"

"No, sir, we've one other in the house. Book-dealer gent. Rides round to country 'ouses, tryin' to buy up old books, not that he seems to have much luck. Asked me, he did, when he arrived a week or so ago, if I'd 'appened to read the tale about our Phantom 'Ound in a magazine. Well, I don't get the time for reading, but we had the writer of it lodgin' here about a year ago, a Dr. Doyle, 'oo 'ad a Mr. Robinson an' Mr. Baskerville with him."

"Mr. *Baskerville*?" Raffles exlaimed.

The landlord chuckled. "I showed the book-dealer gent our Guest Book to prove it." He produced a leather-covered volume from under his counter, consulted the pages, then turned the book to Raffles and me. "See for yourselves, sir."

Under the date 2nd April 1901 were two signatures, one firm and clear, the other boldly scrawled:

A. Conan Doyle, M.D., Norwood, London.

Fletcher Robinson, Ipplepen, Devon (and coachman, Harry M. Baskerville)

"Mr. Robinson brought 'is own dogcart and coachman, see," said the landlord. "Mr. Baskerville'd drive the two gents 'ere an' there on the moor, then wait with the dogcart when the gents trudged off to points they could only get to afoot. Mr. Baskerville took 'is meals in the kitchen with me an' my family an' staff. 'E was tickled pink because Dr. Doyle'd asked him if he'd mind bein' knighted and put in a tale as Sir 'Enry Baskerville. Talk about laugh."

"Well, well!" said Raffles. "There's more behind some of these magazine stories than meets the eye. Is your book-dealer guest still staying here?"

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"Yes, sir. He's out just now. He's out all day, most days, on a horse I hires him. If he ain't back well before dark, by the look of it, he'll get fogged in an' have to put up in some shepherd's bothy. Dartmoor's dangerous in fog."

"Then perhaps we'd be wise to spend the night here ourselves," said Raffles. "Got a couple of vacant rooms?"

"Certainly, sir."

As soon as we had been shown to our rooms, I joined Raffles in his.

"The so-called book-dealer's our man, Bunny. He's 'Sirius,' all right. I want to find his room and take a look at his things while he's out." Raffles opened a door, listened at the crack, then turned. "Mealtime sounds from downstairs, Bunny. The inn folk are in the kitchen, eating. Now's my chance. Watch from that window. If a grey-faced man on a horse arrives, open this door and start whistling *Drink, Puppy, Drink.*"

He was gone. I watched from the window. I thought of the 'Sirius' letter that implied the existence of "Baskerville whelps," and Whyte-Melville's old hunting ditty ran eerily through my mind:

"Drink, puppy, drink, and let every puppy drink
That's old enough to lap and swallow,
For he'll grow into a hound, so let's pass the bottle round,
And merrily we'll whoop and hollo!"

Outside, a stealing mist was beginning faintly to obscure the gaunt buildings of the prison across the plunging dip in the moorland. In front of the inn our dogcart still stood, the horse munching in its nosebag. No man came riding enigmatic out of the mist. And suddenly, silently, Raffles was back in the room.

"Got him, Bunny—knew his room because it's the only one with a few books in it. There was a locked portmanteau. I opened it with the little gadget I carry. There's a small Blick typewriter with a faded ribbon in the portmanteau."

"That settles it," I said.

"Not quite, Bunny. There's also an envelope containing five sheaves of currency notes, each sheaf £100. I dared not take it, of course. There's an Ordinance Survey map of Dartmoor in the portmanteau. I took a look at the map. I could faintly make out the pressure marks left by a pencil when a tracing had been made over the map, and a small *x* marked on it."

"The alleged 'lair of the whelps,' Raffles!"

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"Not only that, Bunny. There's also in the portmanteau a copy of the daily *Devon & Cornwall Gazette,* with a small announcement in the Personal column ringed round in pencil: 'Sirius—instructions awaited.' "

My heart stopped.

"The one thing we didn't want, Bunny," Raffles said, his grey eyes hard, "must have happened. Mr. Greenhough Smith *has* shown the 'Sirius' letter to Dr. Doyle, and that real-life Sherlock Holmes has smelled the trap in it—damn it, he'd be bound to, knowing what *we* know of him! If he inserted that announcement, it's because he's decided to catch 'Sirius' himself, knowing the 'tainted sources' he's probably working for. But, Bunny, that copy of the *Devon & Cornwall Gazette* is four days old! I checked the date on it."

Raffles was searching, as he spoke, through the things in his own valise.

"You see what it means, Bunny? If the map tracing showing the alleged lair of the whelps was posted to *The Strand Magazine* the day the announcement appeared in the *Gazette,* the tracing could have reached Dr. Doyle the day before yesterday, assuming normal mail. He may be on the moor now—the real-life Holmes! He may already have caught 'Sirius' in a counter-trap."

"Or"—I hardly dared say it—" 'Sirius' caught him?"

"My money—remembering Portsmouth—is on the real-life Holmes," Raffles said grimly. He was studying his own Ordinance Map, dug out from his valise. He made a small *x* on the map with a pencil. "There we are, Bunny. There it is—out on the moor—the alleged 'lair of the whelps,' at the neolithic Stone Rows near Higher White Tor. There's where 'Sirius' has set his trap and where he's been keeping vigil over it every day for Doyle to walk blindly into it, 'Sirius' *hopes*!"

"For all we know," I said, "he may be out there at this moment!"

"Bunny," Raffles said grimly, "they may *both* be out there at this moment, stalking each other in this fog that's closing in. There may be *just* a chance that we can take a hand and square a long-outstanding account. The dogcart's outside. The map shows Higher White Tor and the Stone Rows to lie almost due north from Princetown here. Come on!"

Raffles at the reins, the horse jingled along, now at a trot, now

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at a canter, along a rough track through the heather, the wheels of the dogcart jolting and grinding. Mist, slowly deepening over the moor, was beginning to take on the grey tinge that presaged the menace of a Dartmoor peasouper.

Presently, the track became impossible for the dogcart. We left it and trudged on afoot. Heather, sparse and tough, grew among scattered, loose flints, which became more plentiful as we went on.

"Prehistoric flint-chippings, Bunny," Raffles said, "workings of our skin-clad ancestors, the beetle-browed Dawn Men. We must be getting near their settlement, the Stone Rows."

Suddenly a cry came, thin and inhuman, from somewhere ahead. We checked, listening. Again came the cry, soaring to a neighing, despairing screech, and abruptly ceased.

"There's a Dartmoor pony gone," said Raffles, "mired in some morass, and not far off."

I felt the insidious vapour, dankly chill like grave sweat on my face, as we trudged on—blindly, for my part—up a slope that now was virtually a glacis of flint-chippings, debris of the Dawn Men.

"Down!" breathed Raffles. "Listen!"

Flat on my belly beside him, I discerned a thickening in the mist ahead. A little above our level, the thickening was probably one of the Stone Age hut circles, up there on a small plateau. I heard a slight crunching sound. Somebody was walking around among the ruins.

Raffles inched higher, keeping flat. I followed. The rock-edge of the plateau loomed now just above us. I made out the shadowy form of a man up there. From our low-angle viewpoint, he looked like a very thin, tall funeral mute in a high hat and cemetery black.

"The 'book-dealer,' " Raffles breathed in my ear. " 'Sirius.' "

The man's elongated legs moved like scissors as he paced slowly to and fro between the plateau-edge and a ruined hut-wall dimly perceptible in the mist. A strange figure, this gaunt assassin who had been riding about Dartmoor on a hired horse, sniffing at the year-old trail of the author of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

The man passed from view around the angle of the hut wall. We seized our chance to clamber higher, then froze as he reappeared. He resumed his pacing. We kept low. I could feel the thumping of my heart against the ground. Hours seemed to pass. A man of deadly patience, this "Sirius," who must thus for two,

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perhaps three days now have been keeping vigil here over his trap, baited with whelps that never were.

Even as the thought crossed my mind, as I crouched there beside Raffles on the steep slope in this mist-muffled, silent solitude, the man checked his pacing and stood as though intently listening. Then he did a thing that raised the hair on my head.

He howled like a mournful hound.

The wailing cry died away in the mist. All was still, the man a long shadow, listening. I heard faintly, as from the further slope of this tumulus or plateau, the clink of a shod horse's hooves, then walking. The sounds stopped.

A yelp sounded, a sudden ky-yi-ing as of pain, a sharp bark, snarls and growling. Had the human source of these canine sounds not been dimly visible there above on the ledge, I would have sworn they emanated from a litter of whelps contending in a lair among the ruins.

"Bait," Raffles breathed. "He's got a revolver in his hand now. He's holding it clubbed. He's drawing his man on to look for the lair. As he comes around the hut wall, he'll be clubbed senseless and dragged down for disposal in the mire where we heard that pony scream as it was sucked under."

"Who comes?" I whispered. "Dr. Doyle?"

I had no answer from Raffles, for just then, out of the mist-dim ruins of the Dawn Age dwellings, a voice rang, calling: "Is there anybody here?"

Silence. Then sudden, sharp barks, on a note of challenge and interrogation, as from the hidden lair of the "Baskerville Whelps." And, before I sensed his intention, Raffles lunged upwards to the ledge, seized the barking man by the ankles, and jerked his feet out from under him.

He toppled backwards against the hut wall, tore his ankles free, aimed a kick at Raffles' head, then with flying coat-tails made a huge bound clean over the both of us. He landed on the glacis, went slithering down it in a cascade of loose flints, and vanished into the mist.

"Who's there?"—again the voice, peremptory above us.

We looked up. From our angle, the man who stood now on the ledge above us loomed tall in the mist—not a burly figure like Dr. Conan Doyle, but a lean man, a man in a deerstalker cap and an Inverness cape, a figure known the world over, a figure out of *The Hound of the Baskervilles.*

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I seemed to hear the cracking of the thin ice of human reason.

Neither Raffles nor I moved, staring up.

"Who are you?" the man on the ledge demanded, firmly authoritative, conspicuous on his eminence. "I require an answer. You recognise with whom you have to deal!"

I heard Raffles, beside me, draw in his breath, slowly, deeply, as though released from a thrall. Clambering up to the ledge, he stood erect there.

"Yes, we have met," he told the newcomer courteously. "You're the Assistant Editor of *The Strand Magazine*. How d'you do?"

My own bespelled trance dissolved. My reason restored to me, with reservations regarding the newcomer's garments, I clambered up on to the ledge.'

Glibly, Raffles explained that, as amateur Sherlockians, he and I had been prompted by our reading of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to spend a few days on Dartmoor while he worked on his cricket article. Visiting this prehistoric site, the Stone Rows, we had noticed a man here who was behaving oddly. As we watched the man, he suddenly had begun to foam at the mouth and emit canine sounds. Believing him to be seized of a fit of some kind, we had tried to succour him, but he had eluded our helpful attentions and bolted.

"I thought I heard a horse galloping away," said Raffles. "He must have had one tethered down there in the mist somewhere."

"But good God!" exclaimed the Assistant Editor. "Don't you realize, Mr. Raffles? That must've been the man himself—'Sirius'—the *Baskerville* hoaxer!"

"Indeed?" said Raffles, astonished. "Bunny, what a pity we lost him!"

The Assistant Editor, seeming rather nettled by our ineptitude, explained that he had been convinced from the first that the "Sirius" letter was a hoax. To prove it to Mr. Greenhough Smith, who still had been half inclined to let Dr. Doyle see the letter, the Assistant Editor had persuaded Mr. Smith to let him insert the reply—"Instructions awaited"—in *The Devon & Cornwall Gazette*.

On receipt by mail of a map tracing marked with the lair of the alleged whelps, he had come down from London by train, spent the night at Coryton, then hired a horse and set out across the moor to find the marked spot, the Stone Rows.

"Lucky to find the spot, with this mist coming on," he said, not

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knowing how lucky he was not to have had his skull fractured, in mistake for Dr. Doyle's, and to have ended up in the mire that had swallowed the pony. "I borrowed this deerstalker and cape," he said, "from the studio of our artist, Sidney Paget, who illustrates the Holmes stories. My idea was, if the hoaxer should show himself, to give the fellow the shock of his life by suddenly appearing before him as—Sherlock Holmes!"

"You gave *us* a shock," said Raffles ruefully. "Eh, Bunny?"

"Absolutely, Raffles," I said.

"Listen!" exclaimed the Assistant Editor. "What's that sound?"

From somewhere distant in the mist came, faintly, a prolonged, eerie howling. The Assistant Editor blenched, listening, a wild surmise in his eyes.

"It's all right," said Raffles. "That, I think, comes from Dartmoor Prison. The convicts must have learned they have a certain visitor in the vicinity."

From time to time, that night, we heard yowling and catcalling from the nearby prison.

Raffles mentioned it when we set off, very early next morning, in the dogcart, to return it to Missus and catch our train at Lydford. The Assistant Editor, who had also put up at Rowe's Duchy Hotel and who was to go up to London in the same train with us, was astride his hired horse, trotting a hundred yards ahead of us in the grey, foggy morning.

"The yowling from the prison didn't keep the Man with the Cat awake, Bunny," Raffles said. "He was snoring when I paid his room a visit in the night. Have a look in my valise."

Mystified, I unstrapped his valise and took out, in its hygienic wrappings bearing the seal of the Prison Commissioners, the Cat-o'-Nine-Tails.

"If sentence must be carried out within a prescribed time of its order," Raffles said, "there's a chance we may have saved some poor devil a flayed back to-day. There's a nice little quagmire just ahead on the left."

He reined in the horse, looked each way along the road, took the Cat from me and, standing up in the cart, hurled the Cat from him, overarm. It arched high through the air, fell in the green scum, remained for a moment upright like some sordid Excalibur, then was dragged under by its heavy stock.

"The other visit I paid in the night, Bunny," said Raffles, as the

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horse jingled us on again, "was to the room of 'Sirius.' We gave him a shock at the Stone Rows. He hadn't returned to the inn. He wasn't in his room. I think he must have left Dartmoor. So I now have in my pocket the £500 from his portmanteau."

Raffles was mistaken, however. "Sirius" had not left Dartmoor, as I learned two days later, when I completed the cricket article to be signed "by A. J. Raffles" and took it round to his rooms in The Albany, just off Piccadilly.

He showed me a brief newspaper item. It stated that the finding of a riderless horse had led to the discovery on Dartmoor of a man, a guest at Rowe's Duchy Hotel, whose identity had not been satisfactorily established. The horse evidently had had a fall. The man's neck was broken.

"That's what comes," said Raffles, "of galloping a horse in a Dartmoor fog. Not really a clever man, Bunny—certainly not clever enough to catch the real-life Sherlock Holmes in a trap, even if Dr. Doyle had been shown the 'Sirius' letter. Now, about this money. Tainted as its source is, we'll retain £100 to cover our expenses. For the rest, we have an account to settle. It's been outstanding since twenty-five Sherlock Holmes stories ago, so it's high time we squared the account, for the sake of our self-esteem."

We jingled round in a hansom, in the springtime sunshine, to the bank mentioned to us by Mr. Greenhough Smith—Dr. Conan Doyle's own bank, the Oxford Street branch of the Capital & Counties, which he had named in his tales as the bank also of his fictional alter ego, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

"There is here," Raffles said to the cashier at the counter, "the sum of £400—a contribution to the Fund for the translation into many languages and free world-wide distribution of Dr. Conan Doyle's book exposing the evil of slander between nations."

"Very good, sir," said the cashier, counting the currency notes with deft fingers. "To whom do you wish this handsome contribution to be attributed?"

"As amateur Sherlockians, keenly looking forward to the appearance, some day, of a sequel to *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* my friend here and I would like to honour the gentleman who inspired Dr. Doyle's tale of the Phantom Hound. So attribute this contribution, please, to Sir Richard Cabell, and post the formal acknowledgment," said A. J. Raffles, "to his country seat—The Sepulchre, Parish of Buckfastleigh, Dartmoor, Devon."

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a *NEW* "Homesdunit" by

ROBERT L. FISH

Mr. Schlock Homes, the Master Defective—oops, the Master Detective—plunges into the adventure of The Man in Black and comes up with the most outrageous solution in his criminological career . . . Query: if you assume that A. Conan Doyle is the author whom Robert L. Fish most favors (disfavors?) as the subject of spoofing, can you deduce from the internal evidence in this story which author ranks second on Mr. Fish's Parody Parade? No schlock answer, please . . .

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ODD LOTTERIES

by ROBERT L. FISH

My friend, Mr. Schlock Homes, has often made the statement that in dealing with crime his gratification in clearing the innocent far exceeds any satisfaction to be gained in laying the guilty by the heels. His activities in the American Colonies in the year '74 give ample evidence of this. There was his handling of the affair concerning the death of a musician named Foster, for whose demise an innocent might well have suffered had not Homes suggested the possibility that the man had died from eating a poisonous concoction called grits—a case I find listed in my journal as *The Adventure of the Dixie Malady.*

Again, in the colony of California, he was able to prove that the actor Humphrey Beauregard had walked in the wet cement before Grauman's Chinese Theatre quite inadvertently, and therefore no charge of malicious intent could stand—a case I find noted in my records as *The Adventure of the Big Schlep.*

But no case exemplifies Homes's dedication to aiding the innocent as much as one which occurred in our own be-

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loved England, and which I find annotated in my files as *The Adventure of the Odd Lotteries.*

It was a late evening in May and Homes and I had been at the theatre enjoying a wistful drama of old Genoa—*A Boy and His Doge*—and were strolling in leisurely fashion back to the quarters we shared at 221-B Bagel Street. As we turned the corner and approached our door, Homes glanced at me with a faint frown.

"Are you expecting a patient at this hour, Watney?" he inquired.

"Why, no, Homes," I replied, mystified, and then saw the reason for his query. Before our house a hansom cab was stationed, its jehu nodding at the reins as if he might well have been waiting for hours.

We hurried our pace and with Homes in the lead rapidly mounted the stairs to our rooms. There, to our great surprise, ensconced on a comfortable chair before the empty fireplace and with a book in his lap was none other than Homes's old friend from Bloatings Castle in Scotland, Lord Epsworth. At our arrival his Lordship looked up in mild surprise, studying us curiously. Then a bright smile of recognition crossed his features.

"Homes!" he exclaimed in delight. "This *is* a pleasant surprise! What are *you* doing here?"

"I live here," Homes replied with a gentle smile. "What brings you to London, Lord Epsworth?"

"London?" Lord Epsworth looked about him a moment and then nodded. "You are absolutely right, Homes, but then you always are! This *is* London. I remember the sign at Kings Cross when I arrived, now that you mention it. What am I doing in London? Let me think . . ."

He frowned in concentration a moment and then brightened. "Of course! I came to see you, Homes. I need your help."

"To which you are always welcome," Homes said cordially, and lowered himself into the basket chair across from his old friend. He tilted his head in my direction. "You remember Watney, of course?"

"Whitney? Certainly. I knew his father, Eli. Eccentric. Tried to make gin out of cotton, I believe. But where was I?"

His Lordship worried his lower lip with thumb and forefinger a moment and then beamed as it came back to him.

"Of course! I need your help, Homes. Or, rather, I'm not sure I *do* need your help. Or even if help is needed, as far as that goes. But it is odd, you must

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dmit. And what my brother-n-law would say—not to men-ion Lady Epsworth—if they vere aware of it, Heaven only nows. *I* know, of course, which s the problem. Still, in the cir-umstances I felt it essential to peak with you. Surely you un-erstand?"

"Of course," Homes said varmly. "But if you would care o elucidate?"

"Certainly," Lord Epsworth aid and sat a bit more erect, is book sliding to the floor. Lady Epsworth, my wife, I hink—I mean, I know—has een insisting for some time hat I do something more con-tructive than merely raising igs, and since her brother is Commissioner of England Yard n Edinburgh she managed to et me appointed Chief Consta-le of our district. Ridiculous, sn't it?" He looked at us rightly.

We remained silent. He nod-led in agreement and went on.

"Yes. In any event, about two nonths ago the famous cricket-r, A. J. Lotteries, presented imself to me seeking employ-nent. It was just after my ap-ointment, my staff was short, nd he came with an extremely igh recommendation from one other than your cousin, Oliver Wendell—"

Homes interrupted, his eye-rows raised. "Oliver?"

"Yes. I said so, didn't I? Dear me, I'm sure I said—"

"The letter of recommenda-tion was in Oliver's own hand?"

"Well, no," Lord Epsworth admitted. "As a matter of fact, now that I recall, it had been produced on one of those new typing machines. But," he added, brightening, "it had clearly been signed with a large scrawled initial—R."

"But my cousin's initials are O. W."

"Ah!" said his Lordship with unaccustomed logic, "but you know how many poor unfortu-nates are cursed with forgetful-ness."

"True," Homes conceded. "Pray continue."

"Yes. Well, with a recom-mendation that laudatory, I in-stantly hired the man as my personal assistant, and since we would be working closely to-gether, I arranged his quarters at Bloatings Castle itself. And," Lord Epsworth added a bit de-fensively, "until quite recently I had no reason to doubt the wis-dom of the move."

"Ah!" Homes considered Lord Epsworth gravely over tented fingers. "And now you do?"

"I am not sure, which is the reason for my visit," Lord Eps-worth said, and stared contem-platively towards the sideboard. I took his hint and poured my-self a drink as he continued:

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"As you know, Lady Epsworth as well as her brother are very demanding as far as the proprieties are concerned. Any odd behaviour, any variation from the norm on the part of a servant, public or private, would be cause for instant dismissal."

Homes nodded. "I am to understand, then, that this A. J. Lotteries has been acting strangely lately?"

"Yes," said his Lordship, "but I keep hoping there might be a good reason for his erratic behaviour. The thing is, Homes," Lord Epsworth added, looking a bit abashed at his defence of the man, "I like the chap. He's deuced valuable to me. You see, he's the only one who can open the safe. I keep forgetting the combination. Besides," his Lordship added apologetically, "we've been having quite a rash of burglaries in the neighbourhood lately, and it's no time for a Chief Constable to be without an assistant, what?"

"Quite," Homes said agreeably. "Well, of course I shall be only too pleased to help. Now, if your Lordship would care to tell me the exact form of this man's eccentricity?"

"His what?"

"The manner in which his odd behaviour expresses itself."

"Oh, that! What was it, now? Ah, yes! Well, the other night, when everyone was asleep, I was down in the library trying to remember what book I had come down for—or was I returning one?—when I heard a footstep upon the staircase and looked up to see Mr. Lotteries descending cautiously. It was quite dim where I was standing and I was able to observe him quite clearly without being seen in turn. And the chap had on the most outlandish costume! Really!"

Homes sprang to his feet and began to pace to and fro, his thin fingers clasped convulsively behind his back, his piercing eyes gleaming with interest. "Really?"

Lord Epsworth cast his eyes about. "You know, Homes, you *do* have a most annoying echo in here!"

"You were saying about his costume?"

"His what? Oh, you mean his dress! Well, the truth is the man was clothed from head to foot in black. It's the truth. He wore a black opera cloak, with black tennis shoes on his feet, black gloves on his hands, and to top off the weird picture, he wore a black cap pulled low over his forehead, shadowing a black mask that completely covered his face. He—"

His Lordship seemed to note for the first time that Homes was on his feet. "You are leaving, Homes?" He saw the ex-

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pression on my friend's face and hopped to his feet. "No, I suppose I'm the one who is leaving. Well, I knew it had to be one of us. I'll see you at Bloatings to-morrow, then. Good night, Homes. Goodnight, Mr. Watt. I knew your grandfather well—or was it Will? No, no, it was James! Had a thing about steam, as I recall. Well, ta!"

There was the clatter of his Lordship's boots on the stairs and a moment later we heard the crack of a whip followed by the diminishing rattle of carriage wheels in the roughly-cobbled street below. Homes fell back into his chair, smiling broadly.

"Well, Watney," said he, "it seems we are off to Scotland in the morning. In the meanwhile, what do you make of the mysterious Mr. Lotteries and his odd habiliment?"

"Quite simple," I said easily, certain for once of the correctness of my analysis. "The man is plainly mad."

Homes's eyebrows quirked humorously. "Mad?"

"Come, Homes!" I said severely, although in truth I was a trifle pleased to get a bit of my own back with Homes in a matter of deduction. "Surely you heard his Lordship state that the man wore both an opera cloak and tennis shoes?"

"And?"

"Even you, Homes," I said pointedly, "must know that such footwear is strictly *de trop* at the opera! And a cap, rather than a topper!" I brought up my most devastating argument. "And gloves that were not white! Even for *Aida*! Really, the fellow should be restrained!"

Homes nodded, his eyes sparkling with good humour. "Possibly," he agreed, "although probably not for the reasons you give. You seem to have forgotten certain facts."

"Such as?" I inquired coldly.

"Such as the fact that the man was masked. How do you account for that?"

For a moment I was nonplussed, but then I rose to the occasion.

"His Lordship's active imagination," I said loftily. "How else could it be explained, any more than his insistence that in that dim hallway he was able to determine that the man wore only black?"

"Oh, the wearing of the black is easily enough explained," Homes said quietly, and smiled at the puzzled expression on my face. "However, it is getting late and we have a long journey on the morrow. If you would please hand me the Bradshaw, Watney, we'll see if we can make some sense of it this time."

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"The Bradshaw?" I asked, surprised. "I seem to recall that in that affair of the gentleman's gentleman who served the Yiddish quadruplets—you may remember my accounting it in *The Valet of Fir*—you made the statement that the vocabulary of Bradshaw is extremely limited."

"You do not understand," Homes said with a patience that showed signs of wearing thin. "It is precisely *because* Bradshaw is limited that I wish it. If you would look up the Highland Limited, please, Watney . . ."

It was nearing evening the following day when we stepped from our railway carriage at the little village of Rumen Turgid, the local stop for Bloatings. Homes had refused to discuss the case during our tedious ride, preferring to puff furiously upon his pipe and stare speculatively through the blue haze of our compartment out upon the dour landscape. Nor was it until our carriage had stopped at the platform that he put his pipe away and nodded his head in that gesture I knew so well that indicated he was approaching the solution to a problem, or developing palsy. Nor did he break his silence as we drove through the gathering dusk in our rented trap.

Bloatings Castle was a goodly distance from the station, and it was quite dark by the time we handed over the reins to a stableboy in the castle courtyard and made our way through the familiar passages to his Lordship's study. We came upon him in the midst of his cerebrations—he was toasting himself with some Saki at the time—but he quickly put the bottle away and motioned us to chairs.

"It's good to see you, Homes!" said he with warm hospitality. "And you, too, Walton. I knew your great-uncle, Isaak. Had a thing about fish, as I recall." He turned back to my friend, a puzzled frown upon his face. "But what brings you to Scotland, Homes?"

"The mysterious affair of your assistant's bizarre costume," Homes replied calmly.

"So you are aware of that!" said his Lordship, amazed. "Homes, you are amazing!"

Homes refused to respond to this flattery but continued to study his Lordship steadily. "Yes. In fact, I believe I am quite close to the answer to the riddle. Tell me, is Mr. A. J. Lotteries about?"

Lord Epsworth frowned. "I sent him out on some errand or other—I don't remember at the moment what it was—" His face suddenly cleared. "But, of

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course! He returned. He should be in his quarters at the moment, I believe. Would you wish me to ring for him?"

"No," Homes said quietly. "It would be best, I believe, if Dr. Watney and I were to speak with him alone. Could you tell me which room he occupies?"

"Let me see . . . It's the one at the top of the stairs—no, no, that's mine! The one next to it? Surely that's Lady Epsworth's? Or at least it was some years ago. And the next one's a closet—"

"We'll find it," Homes said bravely. "Come, Watney."

In mystified obedience I followed Homes into the hall, but before we could approach the staircase, Homes fell back and over his shoulder I saw, descending the steps, as odd an apparition as ever I have seen! Knowing Lord Epsworth as I did, I had put little true credence in his tale, but now I felt I owed him an apology, for coming down, cautiously but swiftly, was a figure dressed, indeed, entirely in black, garbed with gloves and mask.

Well could I imagine the natural abhorrence such abominable taste in clothing might arouse in one as sensitive to the mode as Lady Epsworth, but before I could pounce upon the creature to demand an explanation, the masked man had passed from the dim hallway and had closed the heavy door firmly behind him.

Homes came from his reverie with a start. "The clank!" he cried. "It is the final proof! Did you hear the clank?"

"The clank?" I asked, mystified.

"The clank!" he repeated fiercely. "After him before he can do harm!"

"You mean that little clinking sound when he walks?" I began curiously, but Homes was already through the doorway in hot pursuit of our prey. I followed instantly.

The moon was lost behind ruffled clouds, and the huge stands of ancient yew that made up the greater part of the castle grounds would have made following the man impossible, except that in the silence of the serene night we could hear the constant clashing of metal upon metal as the man strode confidently along, unaware of our pursuit. We might well have trailed him in this fashion to his destination, led by that clanking sound Homes had so cleverly perceived, had I not inadvertently fallen over a stump some careless gardener had failed to clear.

Our quarry turned instantly, prepared for immediate flight, but before he could make a move Homes was at his side,

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and a moment later I had joined the fray and had my hands about the miscreant's neck, bearing the scoundrel to the ground.

"I have the rascal, Homes!" I cried, and then could not help but add a bit triumphantly, "So you finally recognised that I was right, and that the man could do harm, eh?"

"Let him be, Watney!" Homes said sharply. He squatted down beside the fallen man, pushing me roughly to one side. "Are you all right, Mr. Lotteries?"

The masked figure sat up tremblingly, rubbing his throat. "What—what—?" He suddenly seemed to recognise his captor. "Schlock Homes! What did you do, get lucky for once?"

"Never lucky," Homes said, and shook his head sadly at the man before him. "It was the only solution possible." He reached for the man's cloak and removed the two sets of small tools whose clanking had led to the man's capture. "These tell the whole story. You are much better off without them. Go and try to forget what you had in mind for their use."

Lotteries stared at Homes in astonishment. "You mean I can go?"

"Of course," Homes said warmly. "It is not your fault."

"If you say so," Lotteries said, and stumbled away in the darkness, his shoulders heaving with what had to be sobs of gratitude for my companion's compassion.

"Homes!" I exclaimed. "This whole thing is a mystery to me! Why did you allow the man to escape? You, yourself, just stated that he could do harm!"

"Only to himself, Watney."

"You mean by demonstrating his execrable taste in clothing? Surely an enforced course in fashion at one of our leading boutiques would have been better for all concerned?"

"It would scarcely have cured the man's hypochondria," Homes said dryly, "for that, and that alone, is his problem."

"Hypochondria?" I exclaimed in astonishment.

"Of course! It was evident as soon as his Lordship described the man's costume yesterday evening in our quarters in London."

Homes took a deep breath and began his exposition in that pedantic manner which never failed to irritate me, tapping me upon the chest to emphasize each point.

"To begin with, let us take the gloves and the mask. As you should know, Watney, these are the most common precautions taken by anyone wishing to avoid contact with germs." He removed a finger from my chest to raise it for

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further emphasis. "*But*—in the pure clean air of Rumen Turgid, such a need must obviously only be imagined, and by definition, Watney, that is what is known as hypochondria!"

"But the tennis shoes, Homes?"

"Further proof if it were needed, Watney," Homes said, and thrust a bony finger against my fourth rib. "Tennis shoes are soft and are customarily used, when not on the sporting field, for feet that hurt. But aching feet on one of the leading cricketers of the world, whose feet are toughened by constantly being confined in heavy leather? Impossible! The need for soft shoes, therefore, again is to assuage an imaginary ailment, and again is hypochondria."

"But the black clothing, Homes? Surely," I said, drawing upon my medical background, "a person whose fear of microbes becomes so dominant would confine himself to clothing that is white?"

"Precisely!" Homes said, driving home his point with a further jab that almost took my attention from his argument. "And the fact that Mr. Lotteries did not, can only mean one thing: *that he did not know his clothing was black*! He is, therefore, colour-blind, and on top of his other troubles is therefore more to be pitied for it!"

I could but stand, rubbing my chest, lost in silent admiration for my friend's remarkable analytical ability. But then one disturbing question came to mind.

"But the tools, Homes!" I cried. "I can see no connection between them and the illness of that poor soul, and yet you stated that they were the final proof!"

"And so they were, Watney," Homes replied sadly, and stared down at the two small sets of tools. "Note them well—the miniature prizing levers, the tiny drills, the small sets of saws. Certainly you have seen their like before?"

"Of course, Homes!" I said, recognising them at last. "In a hospital!"

"Exactly," Homes said soberly. "The poor fellow was prepared to perform surgery upon himself, surely the ultimate in hypochondria!"

There was no other answer! It was with the most profound admiration that I followed Homes back towards Bloatings Castle. Once again he had aided an innocent; through his masterful analysis he had saved a man from being condemned by society as a dilettante in fashion, surely a dreadful charge to follow a guiltless soul through life!

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It was several mornings later that I entered our breakfast-room in our own quarters in Bagel Street to find Homes before me. As he drew a curried haggis into his plate—a gift from Lord Epsworth we had forgotten to leave behind—I opened the morning journal and began to read an article which struck my eye.

"I hope, Watney," came the voice of my friend, not entirely in jest, "that you are perusing something which may be of interest to a pair of idle investigators?"

"On the contrary, Homes," I said, slowly reading further into the article which had caught my fancy. "It seems that the crime wave in Scotland has fallen off considerably in the past few days."

"We can only be happy for Lord Epsworth, then," Homes replied, "especially since he is now without an assistant." He suddenly frowned, and then his frown turned to a smile. "However," he added happily, "since the total is always equal to the sum of the parts, Scotland's loss in crime will undoubtedly be England's gain. A letter to the authorities of the northern counties offering my services, if you please, Watney!"

"Q"

DETECTIVERSE

ON THE HEEL OF AN ARCHVILLAIN

(who will soon be in tow)

by MARK GRENIER

Schlock Homes has discovered a sole damning clue
That renders a scoundrel kaput.
Cries Homes, having studied the print of a shoe,
"Come, Watney! The game is a foot!"

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a *NEW* short story by

FLORENCE V. MAYBERRY

We have said it before, and we can't resist saying it again: Florence V. Mayberry writes a kind of highly emotional story that no one else in the mystery field even dares to write. It is a highly charged kind of story, compounded of love and hate, sometimes earthly, sometimes unearthly, and of the tragedies such passions often lead to . . .

GOOD NIGHT, SWEET

by FLORENCE V. MAYBERRY

I was on a streetcar, the kind I rode as a child in San Francisco. Going somewhere. Where? Just somewhere.

The streetcar wasn't crowded; no one sat beside me. Shadows were in front of me, other shadows across the aisle. The shadows were silent, not moving, just letting the streetcar take them somewhere.

Then I saw you, Mark, up by the motorman, leaning against the iron grille that closed the exit. You were looking beyond the grille, ahead, to wherever we were going. When I saw you gazing so intently, it came to me where we were all going. To the ocean. To drown ourselves. I tried to call out to you but the sound wouldn't go beyond my throat. I stared, hard, willing you to turn and look at me instead of toward the ocean. That way, perhaps, none of us would die. The streetcar would stop and all of us would get off, stay alive, and be happy.

You turned and saw me. I asked myself, without words, will I live and be happy? Or will Mark ignore me again? Once in another dream you held me close; even in the dream I felt your breath on my neck and I began to be happy. But it didn't last. The next instant you were gone. Just gone.

This time, in the streetcar, you walked down the aisle and stood

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over me. Your face wasn't gaunt, the way it was that last time in Reno. It was younger, fuller, and your lips tilted in a smile. You bent and I lifted my face for your kiss. Your face came close, then stopped, inches from my lips. My voice ripped loose from my throat, raw and strangled, *"This time, kiss me! Please!"* You shook your head, still smiling.

I leaned against the back of the seat, folded my hands, resigned. Then suddenly I was terrified. All the air had left the streetcar and I was gasping for breath. I looked at the shadowy people to see if they were gasping too. But they weren't. They were dead. Everyone on the streetcar, except for you and me and the motorman, was dead.

I screamed at the motorman, *"Let me off before I'm dead!"* But he only stamped his foot against a bell on the floor and the streetcar went faster and faster with the bell clanging, clanging. *"Stop, stop!"* I screamed.

The motorman swung a handle and the car stilled as though it had never been in motion. I stood up, my head aching and dizzy, and reached for your arm. But you were not there. You were striding ahead, fast. The iron grille slid back and you jumped to the ground.

I hurried after you but the iron grille slammed shut, trapping me inside. I leaned over the grille to see where you were going so that I could follow. But outside the car there was only dense fog. Nothing could be seen, not you, not anything. You were lost. Again.

I shut my eyes, waiting for tears. When they didn't come, I opened my eyes and saw that the fog had cleared away. It was bright sun and morning here in San Francisco, and I was in my bed. Awake after another dream. Mark, could you hear what I said then? *"Maybe he'll come again tonight."* Mark, do you ever hear me when I talk to you? Are you listening? I know you're close by, I *feel* you. If only, sometimes, you would answer me.

Shall we talk about Ursula, Mark? About how crazy over you she was. She never said so, not to anyone in our crowd; they would have told me. But she didn't need to. It was written all over her—her flush when you entered a room, her beaten hangdog look as she watched you hurry toward me, your face eager, the world dropped away, seeing nothing but me. *"Hello, Sweet,"* you would say.

I might as well not have had a name, you used it so seldom.

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"*Hello, Sweet.*" It didn't do anything sweet for me then, it put the devil in me. Especially because Ursula would look so hungry, like starving, as she listened.

"*Why can't you ever say Lacey instead of that silly 'Sweet?'*" I might snap, if I didn't say something worse. Loud, so Ursula could hear. Throwing away the words she longed for as if they were worthless scraps.

"*Don't be cross, Lacey, be nice to me.*" And you would look at me the way Ursula looked at you. That look made me want to hurt you even more. Can't you understand how that was, Mark? Something is soft, and just because it's soft you want to squash it. Like a pillow. So you punch it before you put your head on it.

Mark! Mark! Are you here, are you listening? I thought I heard your footsteps—there they are again, I did hear them! How wonderful, you've come when I'm awake—you didn't wait for the night and dreams. Mark, I can even see you—you're walking through my apartment door, just like old times back in Reno. I've been so afraid you might not find me here in San Francisco. But of course you would, you've always found me. Are you cross? Because I ran away from Reno and left you behind?

Say something! Talk to me, Mark, I'm so lonely.

Just don't look at me that way, Mark. Like back in Reno when sometimes you wouldn't talk, as though you couldn't. Only swallow hard and look at me that way, a long sad look. I'm sorry now for making you feel that way, but I wasn't sorry then. That expression made me want to pluck at your feelings, the way one might pluck a guitar, just to watch your cheek twang with hurt. A nerve in your cheek always twitched as you bit back words you didn't want to say.

Finally the words would spill past your control. "*Sweet, why do you run out on me, why? Sweet, you can get into terrible trouble picking up strange men here in Reno. Anything can happen in Reno, Sweet. Anywhere you want to go, anything you want to do, I'll take you—you don't need anyone else. Marry me, Sweet, let me take care of you.*"

Say it again, Mark. Now.

"*Really, Mark, all the time marry, marry, it's boring. Don't kneel in front of me like that, it makes me want to kick you. It's your own damn fault I run around—you're weak, Mark.*"

I didn't really mean that. I was only trying to make you angry enough to show me you were a man, a strong man. It makes a

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woman furious to have her man seem weaker than she is.

"*I'm bored, take me home,*" I might say, right in the midst of a party in full swing at some night club. How meek you were about it! Take me right home when I really didn't want you to. Kiss me gently, say, "*Good night, Sweet. Sorry the evening wasn't fun. I never seem to do things right for you, do I?*"

After you left I would rush into my apartment and call a cab instead of bothering with my own car. Because some man would always be waiting back at the club, ready to squire me through the evening. Or longer. Men were easy for me to find. It was after I found them that I had trouble.

Remember the night I called you from the phone booth, out on the highway? The night I was pushed out of a car to walk home? You should remember that, Mark. After all, I wouldn't have had to get out of the car if it weren't for you. And if I hadn't called you, you wouldn't have known I chose to do that. You should have been pleased instead of so miserable. Your face drawn and your voice sunk down in your chest—"*Sweet, why do you do these things? Why do you hurt me? I wouldn't hurt you for the world.*"

What do you have now, Mark, that is bigger than the world? Because you're hurting me. You won't talk, won't touch me, you only stare at me. Mark, please talk! Even just a little. Like, where do you stay when I can't see you? Not in a dream, Mark, because this isn't a dream. I'm awake . . .

Mark, how did you get through my door? It was locked; I keep it locked with a chain, I'm so alone here in San Francisco and I'm afraid. How did you— No, no! Please don't leave, don't fade away! Don't go, don't go, stay!

Oh, my God! Damn you, Mark! See what you did by leaving? There's that woman in the next apartment banging on my door again.

"No, I'm all right, I'm fine, it's only the TV. I've got the TV on! Some crazy actress was screaming on TV, go away!"

Mark, she's gone. Hear me? She's gone, so please come back. Please? Oh, there you are, you did come back, Mark. Why did you hide when that woman came yelling at my door, leave me to answer her stupid questions all by myself? You used to help me with everything, you always—

Oh, Mark, don't walk through me! You can't do that! Only dead people do that, like ghosts, like shadows in the mind. And you're real, Mark, aren't you real? There, that's a darling, go sit across

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from me the way you were before. You don't have to talk if you don't want to. I'll talk it all out for both of us and perhaps it will help you to understand . . .

Are you still punishing me for that night I left you in the middle of a dance and went away with—does it matter with whom?—he didn't count, it could have been anyone. I only did it to make you go looking for me. And you did. Remember? You finally found my car parked out by the Hot Springs, beside one of the cabins. At least I had sense enough to go there in my own car.

You could have saved yourself a lot of worry if you had kicked down the cabin door and come in after me. Because whoever it was with me was sitting on a chair across the room, glaring, while I laughed and held a heavy glass vase that I threatened to hit him with if he came near me. Angry face splotched with red, that's all I remember about him.

It was thrilling, Mark. Can't you understand that? You somewhere outside, wandering around Reno trying to find me. This nobody-stranger inside, glaring. All because of me. Exciting.

But you were such a disappointment, Mark. When I came out of the cabin, with red-face still inside, and saw you just waiting for me at the wheel of your car, all my insides went hollow. How could you have just waited? Why didn't you come in after me? Show me you were strong enough to take care of me, even against myself?

I walked over to your car and laughed, when I really wanted to cry. Your cheek was twitching, your eyes were sad and bewildered like those of a loyal hound dog who's been kicked for nothing. "*Get in Lacey,*" you said. "*Leave your car here. I'll get it for you tomorrow. Let me take you home.*"

"*Might as well,*" I said. "*Nothing else left to do. Not tonight anyway.*" You flinched, filling my empty words with meaning.

It was a beautiful night. White moonlight shimmering over the valley floor. You didn't turn toward Reno. You headed toward Carson City. "*What? Not going home?*" I asked.

You didn't answer, didn't even shake your head. I looked closely at you. In the moonlight your face was shining. Wet with tears. Mark, why did you cry? I didn't want you to cry. I wanted you to shake me, hit me, kiss me—anything but tears. It put the very devil in me.

We passed Carson City. Down to Minden and Gardnerville. Past them. You driving and weeping. Just driving and weeping.

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I began to scream. You stopped, tried at last to put your arms around me. I twisted away, opened the door, ran down the highway, and turned off the road. You behind me, calling, "*Sweet, please! Wait!*"

You caught me and together we tottered above a ravine we couldn't see. I shoved you and you slipped so suddenly you pulled me with you. You let go, fell away into the ravine. I rolled over and over, came to a stop on a small ledge. Below I heard you still tumbling, pebbles scattering. Then silence.

I called, "*Mark! Mark!*" But there was no answer. I waited a while, afraid to move either up or down because of the sheer bank, hoping someone would see the car parked on the highway and stop to see why. I called for help, but the sound only made the night seem more lonely.

At last I crept down to find you, sliding, dirt falling with me.

Your head was resting against a big rock. You were unconscious, but still breathing. We were beside a stream, its water rippling and gurgling, the ground under us moist and slippery. I shook you and cried, "*Wake up!*" But you wouldn't. It made me furious to be left alone in the dark, dirty and bruised, with no one to help me.

"*Why did you bring me here! Why didn't you just take me home!*" I yelled.

You still wouldn't answer. You made me so angry. So I scooped up a handful of wet mossy earth and put it over your nose. You began to breathe heavily through your mouth. Then I gathered up two handfuls of moss and earth, spread them over your mouth, and patted them down.

After that I crawled up the sharp slope, somehow released and peaceful, not angry any more. The sky was turning gray. Soon it would be morning. I could wave down a car, tell whoever was in it that you were dead and wouldn't need to cry over me any more. Truly, I had such a kind feeling, as though I had helped you.

I was almost to the highway when I heard you call, "*Lacey! Lacey, darling! Are you hurt?*"

The kindness left me. "*Aren't you dead yet? I killed you! You ought to be dead!*"

When you reached me I couldn't seem to stop telling you what I had tried to do, over and over. You didn't say anything at first. You were so quiet. Then you said, "*Poor little girl, poor little Lacey.*"

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You led me to the car and for a long time we sat in it, neither of us speaking, your head pressed against your hands on the steering wheel. Finally you straightened and said in a faraway lost voice, *"Lacey, I'm bad for you. I see that now, even though I don't understand it. Because I do love you. So much. Maybe it's chemistry, maybe—I don't know what it is. But for some reason I'm destroying you by holding onto you. I won't do it any more."*

I didn't believe you.

But only two weeks later—remember?—you came late one night to my apartment and told me you were going to marry Ursula. It was so funny. I laughed and laughed. Because your stricken, hungry expression said so clearly that I was the one you really wanted to marry.

I threw back my head, and laughed and laughed and laughed. You grabbed me, shook me, as though my laughter ripped loose a barrier inside you and freed a torrent of pent-up fury. You pushed me against the wall and banged my head against it. I cried out, more in amazement than in hurt. Then you kissed me, kissed me so hard you bruised my face. Kissed me again and again as my arms crept around your neck, and clung. Clung, as I kissed back.

Why did you push me away and walk out of the apartment? Mark, couldn't you tell after those kisses that I had wanted this from you all along? That violence lurking beneath your softness, springing out of the cave of what you really are. All along, Mark.

I started to run after you, to catch you, keep you. Then stopped, sure you would be back. Instead I went to the telephone and called Ursula. Did she tell you, or was she afraid to? *"Hello, Ursula darling? This is Lacey. Congratulations! Mark was here telling me the news. Really, I've never seen him so worked up—he must be almost insane with joy. Grabbed me, held me, kissed me until my mouth is simply bruised, honestly he was simply in a passion at the very mention of his engagement. What a terrific effect you have on him, Ursula, it's obvious he's terribly, terribly—Ursula? Ursula?"*

She had hung up. Softly. I didn't know she had done it until I noticed the flat sound of my words. A dead line.

You know how our crowd in Reno was, Mark. Most of us a little crazy. Only a few quiet ones, like you and Ursula. Quiet on the surface, that is. Anyway, we did a lot of sharing, ran together, did everything together, shared crazy stunts.

Naturally I phoned the others, those I could find at home, after

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Ursula hung up. *"It's a scream—what do you think crazy has happened? Mark and Ursula are engaged! Yes, Mark was just here telling me. And of all freaked-out ways to tell me! Honestly he was mad, I mean mad like crazy. He shook me, kissed me until I was breathless, then ran away.*

"Oh, yes, of course he loves me, always will—he whispered that just before he tore out of the apartment. Well, I know I give him a bad time, but that's no reason to ask poor Ursula to marry him, just for spite. I feel so sorry for her, she probably believes she's really got him at last, and if her heart is broken I suppose everyone will blame me. And of course it will be my fault. But what can I do with me? I'm a wicked, wicked woman."

Whichever one I was talking to would laugh. And I would laugh. But it wasn't funny, Mark. All the time I was saying inside, *What if Ursula really holds onto him? What if he doesn't come back?*

So it was a dirty trick, Mark, for you to run away the very next night to Las Vegas, get married there, quick, to keep from coming back to me. *Poor Ursula, she probably believes she's really got him at last.* Instead, it was poor Lacey. Did she ever get fooled!

I had to save face. So I threw a terrific welcome-home party for the bridal couple. Invited the whole crowd. Made out it was the joke to end all jokes. On me. Laughed a lot as I telephoned the invitations.

I dressed for the occasion as carefully as a bride. Not as the free-wheeling, sexy type, not that night. I wore a long Kate Greenaway dress, white with bouquet sprigs printed on it, and a blue velvet sash with long streamers. Like a sweet child, I looked, a smile trembling on my lips. I know, I practised at the mirror. A sweet child who has been caught in the cookie jar and is begging for forgiveness.

I kissed Ursula's cheek, wanting to bite it. I took both of your hands, looked up at you, and said, *"Oh, Mark, my dear darling, please be happy forever and ever. I've kissed the bride. Can't I do the same to the groom?"*

What else could a nice polite man do for his hostess? You bent stiffly and kissed me. My lips parted softly as my hands touched your shoulders and clung gently. Sweat popped out on your forehead as you straightened, and your cheek was twitching. Everywhere I moved that night, serving refreshments, being gay and adorable, I felt your eyes on me. When I looked at you, you

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would turn your head too quickly, caught at staring, your face flushed. When you took my hand and said good night, you held it until Ursula yanked at your arm. You stumbled as you turned away because your eyes were still on me.

I knew you would be back. Alone. Sometime.

I was surprised when it was that same night. Early morning, it was. How you got away from Ursula I don't know and it doesn't matter. Perhaps it was very simple; she was sleeping and you couldn't, so you just slipped out of the house. I couldn't sleep either and was wandering around the apartment still in my party dress, picking up things.

Then I heard your footsteps outside my door. I've heard them so often I couldn't miss them. I tiptoed to the door. "*Mark?*" I whispered. "*Yes,*" you whispered back. I opened the door and held out my arms.

I don't need to tell you any more. You'll remember. You couldn't forget. Or could you? Have you, Mark? Perhaps even then you were forgetting. Else how could you have left me that morning to go back to Ursula? How could you have given me a final kiss and breathed, "*My God, I wish I could hate you!*" And then left me.

It was too much to bear, Mark. Do you understand that? I couldn't bear being left.

Afterward, as soon as I could, I came back to San Francisco where I was born and raised. There was a longing in me to go backward, to be a child again, to get away from the strange person I had become. I found this apartment—do you like it, Mark, do you suppose you could stay with me here? It's very nice, close to the ocean; sometimes I go walking barefoot in the sand and let the wind blow through me until I feel hollow and clean. We could go to the ocean together, Mark, awake, not just in a dream.

I knew you would finally come back to me. Without Ursula. It's so lovely to have you here, in my room, looking at me. Only, come close, touch me. Please.

Oh, well. Sometime. Perhaps.

You're still punishing me, Mark. That's why you never stay with me, why you slip in and out, never let me be sure of you. Like the other night when I was looking out of my bay window. So late, past midnight, the street empty. But suddenly there you were, walking along the sidewalk across the way. I raised the window and called, "*Here, up here! I've been waiting for you.*"

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You raised your head quickly. Then you were so cruel. Because you had disguised yourself behind another face. That mask stared up at me, grinning. Your head shook no; you turned away and went into a house down the street.

I fell on the divan and cried and cried. When I arose from the divan I didn't seem asleep; everything looked the same—the same room, and I was wearing the same clothes. "*You fool, you let him go!*" I told myself. "*Go down to that house and get him!*"

I ran to the door and tried to take hold of the knob. But there wasn't any door, it was only painted on the wall. I ran to the bay window. There was no glass, only a painted window frame. My living room was a prison without an exit. I was trapped, kept forever from reaching you.

Someone moaned, a chilling, terrible sound. I ran from wall to wall, looking for whoever it was who moaned. The lights became dim and it was difficult to see. I stumbled over something and thought it was you, and I was afraid I had hurt you. I was on my knees, crawling and screaming, "*Mark, Mark, get up, don't lie there! Help me!*"

That woman next door knocked on my door, yelling, "*What's the matter? Are you ill? Can I help?*" I screamed at her to go away, that it was only a bad dream I was having. So she left.

It must have been a dream even though it seemed so real. Because after I spoke to the woman, the lights became bright and I saw that the door was real, not painted on. It had a knob and I could turn it. But I was too tired to go looking for you. You understand, don't you, Mark? I was just too tired.

But tonight I'm not tired. If you leave me tonight, I'll follow. Mark, did you hear me! You might as well stop; there's no use trying to get away, I'll never let you leave me again!

No, don't go through the window! Not out on the window ledge, you'll fall! There's no balcony—Mark, do you hear me? There's nothing but air out there! Come back . . .

But it's holding you—you're walking on it. As though it were solid. Just standing out there. On nothing.

Or is it something? Something I don't understand. Is it, Mark?

Oh, darling, your arms are reaching for me—you really want me to come with you this time, don't you? I've waited so long for you to take me with you. Will the air hold me too, Mark? All right, of course I'll come, Sweet, hold out your hand to steady me, I'm coming . . .

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Reno Woman Dies
Leaps From Window

Lacey Bradford Hume, 26, who recently moved to San Francisco from Reno, Nevada, died early this morning following a suicide leap from the second-story window of her beach apartment. Neighbors stated that she apparently suffered from hallucinatory dreams and had cried out loudly just before her death plunge.

Police check with Reno authorities revealed that Mrs. Hume, a divorcee, was known by associates in that city to have been despondent following a tragedy of last year when her car ran out of control and killed a longtime friend, Mark Sheldon. The coroner's inquest held that the death had been accidental and Mrs. Hume was not charged.

Sheldon, who lived a few hours after the accident, stated he had seen Mrs. Hume collapse at the wheel and her car go out of control. He rushed to the car in an attempt to stop it, stumbled, and was pinned between the car and a tree. There were no witnesses, since the accident occurred in early morning on a quiet residential street.

In addition to her despondency over Sheldon's death, it is reported Mrs. Hume brooded over an abortive attempt by Sheldon's widow, Mrs. Ursula Sheldon, to initiate charges of premeditated murder against Mrs. Hume who had been her husband's former fiancee.

Mrs. Hume has no known relatives. Interment will be . . .

Mark, where is your hand? I can't find it. Mark! Mark! I'm here, I followed. But where—where are YOU?

"Q"

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DETECTIVERSE

RIGOR MORPHEUS

by ROSE-MARIE PROVENCHER

At last! The night is rainy,
A perfect eve to read
That mystery I've been saving,
Filled with death and dire deed.
Ah, luxury delicious
As into bed I leap,
Adjust the light to perfect height
And promptly — fall asleep.

© *1975 by Rose-Marie Provencher.*

WHOSE CLUES BREWS NEWS

by K. PATRICIA JOY

Detectives real and fictional,
In singles and in twos,
Come up with tricks unusual,
Which seem to make the news.
Some go by regulations—
A list of don'ts and dos;
Some operate successfully
According to their views.
Some depend upon their strength,
And the weapons they can use;
Some rely entirely
On disguises that they choose.
Some talk about the fingerprints,
And various other clues,
But there's nothing more distinctive
Than a pair of squeaky shoes!

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a *NEW* Captain Leopold story by

EDWARD D. HOCH

We have described Captain Leopold of the Violent Crimes Squad as a straightforward cop whose cases are seldom straightforward. Well, here is the least straightforward case to come Captain Leopold's way in many a moon, and you'll find the Captain, as usual, hanging in there, not giving up, seeing it through to the bitter end . . .

CAPTAIN LEOPOLD AND THE ARROW MURDERS

by EDWARD D. HOCH

Harry Standing Elk slipped quietly through the hedge, taking care to keep to the shadows where the glow from the fire could not reach him. There were four people gathered around the fire, talking and eating and drinking. They had not heard his approach. He slipped the bow off his shoulder and threaded the notched arrow onto the string. With four it would be difficult, but he thought it could be done.

One of the women—the pretty one—stood up suddenly and headed for the house. It was the break he'd been waiting for. He let fly the first arrow and caught the stocky man full in the chest. A gasp escaped his lips as he sunk to his knees. The second man half turned, a look of shocked horror on his face. But already Standing Elk had the second arrow in place, already he had pulled back his arm to launch it.

The woman screamed and tried to hide behind the outdoor grill. Standing Elk was running toward them now, firing a third arrow at her, aiming a fourth at the girl who'd reappeared in the doorway of the house.

It was all over within a minute.

He took a piece of charcoal from the bag by the fire and started writing with it on the

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patio floor. He wrote: *Death to the Despoilers of Indian Land!* He signed it: *The Depredator.*

Harry Standing Elk took one last look at the four arrow-pierced bodies. Then he slung the bow back over his shoulder and retreated through the hedge.

Lieutenant Fletcher was waiting at the hospital for Leopold. He met him in the hallway outside the intensive-care unit. "They think she'll pull through, Captain. And she's conscious now, if you want to question her. They've given her something to calm her."

Leopold went to the woman's bed. Her eyes were closed, and he spoke her name softly. "Mrs. Culver? Can you hear me, Mrs. Culver?"

Her eyes opened. "Yes. I'm awake." She had a slim sad face and brown eyes.

"I'm Captain Leopold of the Violent Crimes Squad. Can you tell me what happened?"

"They're all dead, aren't they? My husband and the Greens?"

"Yes. You're lucky to be alive. Did you see the person who shot the arrows?"

"Not at first. John—my husband—was just standing there, staring off into the night, when the arrow hit him in the chest. Then Herb Green turned to see what happened and he was hit too. I ducked down behind the outdoor grill and that must have thrown his aim off. The arrow hit me in the side. Then Pam Green came to the door and he got her too. He came forward and I had a glimpse of him while he wrote his message with the charcoal."

She closed her eyes again. All that talking had been a strain. "Could you give us a description, Mrs. Culver?"

"He was tall and he moved fast—very light on his feet. Dark hair, but I couldn't really see his face."

"How was he dressed?"

"A blue shirt and jeans. Some sort of moccasin-type shoes. I saw those when he was standing near me, when he thought I was dead. God, I was afraid he'd shoot another arrow into me!" She fought back a sob. "That was all I could think about—that and what he'd done to John."

"Could he have been an Indian, Mrs. Culver?" Leopold asked.

"You mean a real Indian? I don't know."

"Did your husband or the Greens have any enemies?"

"No one. No one who could have done such a thing."

"All right," Leopold said. "Rest now. We'll talk to you again later."

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Outside the room Fletcher was waiting for him. "Any description?"

"Tall, dark, wearing jeans. Could fit a thousand people. She didn't see his face. Doesn't know if he's a real Indian."

"He's a nut is what he is! Imagine killing three people with a bow and arrow!"

"I want you to start checking the archery clubs around town, Fletcher. He's good with that bow, and we don't know much more about him."

"What do you think the message means, Captain? The one he wrote with charcoal."

"It means he'll kill again if we don't find him, Fletcher."

Harry Standing Elk had not really known the people he'd killed. They'd merely happened to be in that spot, around the backyard barbecue, when he came along. He'd watched them for a time, crouched in the darkness behind the hedge, and then made his move. He was surprised and a little alarmed when he read in the newspaper that one of the women had survived his attack, but the vagueness of her description reassured him. She hadn't really seen enough of him to identify him.

Still, it might be wiser to concentrate on single targets in the future.

Three nights after his first strike he unlocked the closet door where he kept the powerful bow and a large supply of hunting arrows. He knew it was dangerous to go out again so quickly, but the very danger added an element of excitement. He chose the arrows carefully, fitting them into the carrier attached to the bow itself. Then he slid the whole thing into a paper dry-cleaning bag, suspending the bow from the hanger. When he carried it so that the bow hung free inside its bag, he might have been a cleaner delivering a freshly pressed suit.

This night he drove back to the same neighborhood, parking just a few blocks from where he'd been the previous time. He picked a house with the lights on and headed up the driveway as if making a delivery.

After he gave the doorbell a quick ring, he retreated into the shadows some twenty feet away and slipped the bow from beneath its paper cover. The door opened and a man stood silhouetted against the lighted room behind him. He didn't open the screen door but peered through it to ask, "Who's there?"

Standing Elk's arrow punctured the screen and took the man squarely in the chest. . .

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Captain Leopold didn't like it. The four had been bad enough, with three of them dead and the woman still in the hospital. This latest killing seemed to confirm his fear that they were dealing with a madman who would keep on with his murderous attacks.

"We're going to have the city in a panic if this keeps up," Fletcher predicted. "People will be afraid to open their doors."

They were in Leopold's office on the morning after the latest killing, going over what few clues there were. "Just where was the note found?" Leopold asked. He'd been attending a police conference in Boston the previous night and hadn't yet visited the scene of the crime.

"Pinned to the garage door with another arrow. You'll be able to see it in the pictures."

"Same wording?"

"Same wording. *Death to the Despoilers of Indian Land!* And signed *The Depredator.*"

"Any witnesses?"

"The dead man—Sam Windman—was alone in the house at the time. His wife bowls on Wednesday nights. No one saw the actual killing, but a neighbor across the street says she noticed a man carrying a dry-cleaning bag up to the house at about the time it must have happened."

"At night?"

Fletcher nodded. "She thought to was an odd time for a delivery, but unfortunately she didn't watch to see what happened."

"Is Connie around?"

"I'll buzz her desk."

In a moment Policewoman Connie Trent appeared in the doorway. "How was Boston?"

"The usual," Leopold answered with a shrug. "You working on anything right now?"

"The parking-lot muggings. And that knifing on Chandler Street."

"Let Rafferty handle those. I need you on the Depredator thing."

"God, I heard there was another one."

"Last night. He used his bow and arrow again and left the same message. It'll hit the noon editions of the papers."

"What do you want me to do?" she asked.

"Concentrate on the Indian angle. See if you can find somebody at one of the colleges who might know about such things. Check the land deeds and see if there's something about old Indian land in the vicinity of the killings."

"I'll get right on it," she promised.

"What about me?" Fletcher asked.

"Take as many men as you need and start checking out

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that neighborhood. I'm still not completely sold on an Indian killer, despite the bow and arrow. Have you checked the archery clubs?"

"Lots of names, nothing else so far."

"Any Indian names?"

"Like Sitting Bull? Not a one."

"All right. You've arranged for added patrol cars in the area?"

"The Commissioner himself did that. And they're to cruise with red lights flashing, so they can be seen several blocks away. He's hoping that'll discourage our man."

"I don't think he'll be that easily discouraged," Leopold said.

Harry Standing Elk avoided the furnished apartment for two full days after the killing of Sam Windman. He read the newspaper accounts and watched the television reports with great interest, but they seemed to be about someone else's crime, someone else's life.

When he finally did return and once again unlocked the closet door, he did so reluctantly, telling himself he merely wanted to feel the pull of the bow string against his fingers.

But then he was cruising the streets again, the weapon dangerously exposed on the seat by his side. He felt, as the excitement grew within him, that he was challenging them to spot him. Driving along the streets of the familiar neighborhood, he saw the distant flashing red of a patrol car and he knew they were out in force.

He parked at the corner of a street, where he could see in three directions and have a choice of three escape routes. But before he had settled on a possible target he saw the flashing red light turn onto the street two blocks behind him. There were too many of them tonight.

He started his car and drove away.

Back at the apartment he locked the weapon away in the closet. They thought they had him on the run, but he was only beginning. Next time he'd show them.

Next time he'd kill someone in broad daylight.

"Captain, are you free this morning?" Connie asked, poking her head into his office.

"I'm free if it's the arrow killings. That's the only thing that would get me down here on a Saturday morning in summer."

"I've been checking on this Indian thing and I've located someone at the University who might be able to help us. I'm on

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my way out to see him now."

"Let's go," Leopold said.

The day was hot and breezy and she drove with the car windows down. There was little traffic in the area of the University, because only summer classes were in session. Connie parked in front of the Administration Building and they got out. "His name is Miles Furness, and he's Professor of Folklore and English. Somebody told me he knows everything about Indian culture. He said on the phone he'd be here till noon."

Professor Furness proved to be a tall dark-haired man in his late thirties, with a ready smile and a firm handshake. "I'm more than willing to help, if I can. Come into the office."

Leopold seated himself next to Connie, taking in the Indian artifacts and colorful Remington prints on the walls of the little room. "I explained on the phone what we needed," Connie said.

Professor Furness nodded and reached for a thick book on his desk. "The Depredator is one of a number of folk heroes of the Iroquois nation. He is called Ga-nus-quah, and the Iroquois myth has it that he is vulnerable only on the bottom of his foot."

"Like the heel of Achilles," Leopold observed.

"Exactly. The myths of all nations have certain recognizable points of similarity. But the Depredator is unique in one respect—no human being has ever seen him. To look on his face means instant death."

"Medusa," Leopold muttered.

"Yes. The sight of her turned men to stone. But the Depredator is never described as being horrible to look at. He is merely—what? unseen?—and all-powerful. A giant of stone."

"We have a woman in the hospital who almost saw him."

"The murderer you seek has obviously read a great deal of Indian lore. Perhaps he also imagines his people wronged by the white land-grabbers."

"The four killings thus far have all been in an area known as Maplegrove. For years it was an undeveloped section right on the city line. Then, about a decade ago, a home builder got approval to construct a development there."

Furness reached behind him and produced a rolled map. "I've been doing some research on this ever since Miss Trent's phone call. Here's what I've found." He unrolled the map on his desk, holding down the sides with the telephone and an ashtray. "This is the area you refer to as Maplegrove, scene of the two attacks thus far. You can see from this old map that

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it was an area sacred to the Mohegans. Perhaps a burial ground, or a place of worship."

Leopold had bent to study the map. "Could I borrow this, Professor?"

"It's a rare map, but I could Xerox this portion for you."

"Please do."

While he was gone, Connie asked, "What do you think, Captain? Do we have a crazy Indian killing people because they're living on sacred land?"

"Either that or someone who wants us to think he's a crazy Indian."

Professor Furness returned with the copy. "I wish I could be of more help."

"Perhaps you can," Leopold said. "Did you ever have any students—or anyone else—who expressed interest in this material?"

"What—The Iroquois myths and the Mohegan sacred areas? No, not really. I don't teach either one in my folklore course."

"Did you ever have any American Indian students?"

"No-o-o. . . I don't think so . . . Wait a minute—there was one fellow, some years back. But he didn't take any great interest in the old myths."

"What was his name?"

"I'd have to look it up."

"Could you do it, please?" Leopold asked. "It probably won't mean anything, but I hate to overlook any possible lead."

Furness stared intently at the ceiling. "Let's see . . . that would have been four—no, five—years ago. My enrollment records should show his name. I'll know it when I see it. Something like . . ."

"Take your time," Leopold said.

"I think it was . . . yes, here—the boy's name was Harry Standing Elk."

The supermarket near Maplegrove was filled with Saturday afternoon shoppers. Watching them from his car in the parking lot, Harry Standing Elk wondered how many he could have picked off with his arrows as they came out the automatic doors wheeling their shopping carts. But most went directly to their cars, loading the groceries into the vehicles and leaving the carts to clutter the lot. What he needed, to be safe, was one who lived nearby, who would leave the area on foot.

Finally one came—a stout woman carrying a single small bag of groceries. She avoided the parking lot and headed around the rear of the store, crossing a weed-infested lot toward a line of low ranch homes on the next street.

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Standing Elk started his car and drove around the block. He spotted her just as she reached the sidewalk, and he pulled up to park across the street, a bit behind her. She didn't look in his direction.

First he tried aiming the bow through the open window of the car, but it kept hitting the windshield. Finally he glanced down the street, seeing her moving farther away with each step. A block away some children played in a front yard, and a few houses beyond them a man was washing his car. Otherwise the street seemed deserted. Standing Elk opened his car door and got out, using the door as a shield while he threaded the arrow.

His first shot hit her in the back and she went down on her knees, sending groceries flying across the sidewalk. He was bringing a second arrow up to aim when he saw that it wouldn't be needed. The woman had collapsed on her face, uttering only a low moan before she lay still.

He slid back into the car and drove quickly away.

The little man was waving his hands with excitement as he talked to Leopold. "I saw him! I saw him! He stood by the side of his car and shot her in the back with a arrow! My God, I couldn't believe my eyes!"

"Try to talk slower, Mr. Franklin, and tell us just what happened."

They were standing in the driveway of a house across the street from the spot where Betty King had died, and Leopold's men were still working with their cameras and evidence bags, keeping back the neighbors. The street was tense with a mixture of curiosity and horror as word spread about the latest killing. This one had been in daylight, and that meant no one was safe.

". . . saw the car pull up and park," Mr. Franklin was saying. "Naturally I was curious about a car in front of my house. Thought it might be a salesman or something. So I watched through the front window. He was doin' something in the car for a minute or so, but I couldn't see what. Then he got out, on the far side, and I saw the bow and arrow. I still couldn't believe he was goin' to kill her. Not till he did it."

"What did the man look like?"

"Big. Black hair."

"Young?"

"I never got a good look at his face. He was turned away from me all the time."

"What about the car?"

"I saw that, all right. It was a blue Ford with a white top

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—last year's model, I think. Seemed to be in good condition."

"What model Ford?"

"The standard one, I think. It wasn't a compact."

"How about the license number?"

"Yeah. I thought of that right away."

"Did you get it?"

Franklin shuffled his feet. "Just part. It ended in 567, I remember that, because it was easy to remember. But there were two other numbers and a letter that I didn't catch."

"Thank you," Leopold said. "You've been a big help."

As he walked back across the street, he couldn't help wishing that Mr. Franklin had been more of a help. His description of the killer added nothing to what they already knew. The description of the car was helpful but frustratingly incomplete. Nevertheless he passed it along to Fletcher with instructions to put out an alarm.

"It's probably stolen," Fletcher reasoned. "He wouldn't use his own car in broad daylight."

"He might if he's crazy," Leopold replied. "I wish to hell our witness had gotten the entire license number."

Fletcher lowered his voice. "Have you looked at the faces of these people, Captain? They're about one step away from sheer panic. They're talking about setting up armed street patrols to protect their neighborhood."

"I can't say I blame them, but we don't want them out shooting at each other. I'll try to calm them down."

While Leopold talked to the people, Fletcher radioed in a description of the wanted car. Then he tried to call Connie at Headquarters to tell her of the latest killing, but she was off somewhere checking out a lead.

When Fletcher went back to the crowd on the sidewalk, Leopold was just turning away. "I reassured them as best I could. I told them we'll patrol day and night with a double shift."

"You're certain he'll stick to this area, Captain?"

"I think so. He imagines this development has desecrated some sacred Indian land."

"You know something? He didn't leave a note this time."

"I guess that arrow was message enough. Any luck with the sporting-goods stores?"

Fletcher shook his head. "None, Captain. They're standard hunting arrows. They sell 'em by the hundreds or thousands every fall. There've been no unusual purchases this spring or summer, but that doesn't prove anything. He

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might have bought them last fall, during the hunting season, or more recently in some other city."

"All right. Let's finish up here."

"What's Connie up to?"

"She's checking a name we got from Professor Furness this morning. An Indian student he had five years ago. Probably no connection, but I'm not overlooking a thing."

One of the patrolmen was signalling to Fletcher from the car. "Headquarters wants you, Lieutenant."

"Be right there."

Fletcher walked over and took the microphone from the patrolman. Headquarters came on at once. "We've a possible fix on that wanted car, Lieutenant."

"That was fast!"

"A patrol was passing a parking lot just as they got the description. They spotted a blue and white Ford, license number ZUF-567. Could be the car."

"Could be. Where is it?"

"Parking lot corner of Greggs and West End Avenue. Lot of apartments in the area."

"Yeah, I know it. Find out who it's registered to, will you?"

"Will do. Hang in there."

Fletcher walked over to Leopold and told him the story. "Maybe we're in luck."

"We could use some."

Fletcher walked back to the patrol car and waited for the word on the license number. After another few minutes it came through. "Lieutenant, that car belongs to Superior Car Rental."

"Damn!"

"We can find out who leased it, but it'll take a while. They've got lots of rental agencies around the area, and their main office is closed on Saturday."

"Do what you can," Fletcher said. "I'm going over there to look around. Greggs and West End, right?"

"Right, Lieutenant. Car 55 is standing by."

Harry Standing Elk carefully stowed the bow and hunting arrows in the closet of the furnished apartment and locked the door. Then he went to the refrigerator and took out a beer.

It had been a good day. The first one in daylight.

Now maybe they'd know he meant business. Now maybe they'd pack up and leave the land, leave it to the spirits of Harry's kin.

He took a swallow of beer and walked casually to the window overlooking the parking lot. Then he froze.

There was a police patrol car

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down there, parked on the street. A uniformed officer was talking to another man, and the two of them were gazing in the direction of Harry's rented car.

His first reaction was to run to the closet. But before he could unlock it he had second thoughts. There was nothing about the car that could identify him. He'd worn gloves and had been careful about fingerprints, and he'd leased it under a false name, using a faked driver's license. If he just sat tight, he was safe.

Now he saw they were talking to the man who ran the parking lot. The man shrugged and pointed vaguely toward Harry's building and the one next to it. The man with the police officer nodded and started walking toward the buildings.

Harry Standing Elk considered the possibilities. He could run away, down the back stairs and into the alley, abandoning both apartment and car. Or he could stay and bluff it out. The man in the parking lot didn't know him. Nobody knew him. They couldn't prove a thing unless they found the bow and the arrows. And if it came to that he'd kill first. As if to reinforce the idea, he picked up his knife.

He heard voices down the hall and presently there was a knock on his door. "Who's there?" he called out.

"Police. Open up!"

"What do you want?"

"Just some questions to ask you."

Standing Elk edged the hunting knife out of its sheath and held it behind his back. "All right. Wait a minute."

He opened the door and the man he'd seen from the window flashed a badge and identification card. "I'm Lieutenant Fletcher. We're checking on a car in the lot next door that might be stolen. A blue and white Ford. Lady down the hall says she thinks it belongs to somebody on this floor. Would you know anything about it, Mr—" the detective's eyes went to the name on the door "—Elk?"

Harry gripped the knife tighter. "Not a thing, Lieutenant. I don't own a car myself. I'm just up from New York, and I never even learned to drive one down there. Traveled the subways, mostly."

"Well, you'll find you need one around here. How about the next apartment? Know who lives there?"

"A young couple, I think."

"They got a car?"

"I really don't know."

"Okay, Mr. Elk. Sorry to bother you."

"Perfectly all right."

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He closed the door and leaned against it. That had been close. That had been very close. And how ironic that the man's name was Fletcher. The very word meant a maker of arrows!

On Sunday morning in his office Leopold asked them, "Where are we? Do we have anything at all to go on?"

"Well, you know we found the car," Fletcher replied, tapping a pencil on the desk as he spoke. "But not the person who leased it. He used a false registration and the girl at the car rental place can't remember him. He may have had a room in a nearby apartment building, but I can't find anyone who knows for sure."

"Fingerprints?"

Fletcher shook his head. "He may be crazy, but he's careful. We checked all the places —steering wheel, rear-view mirror, door handles, radio knobs. Nothing."

Leopold swung around and asked Connie, "What about that name you're checking?"

"I'm having trouble finding the right people on the weekend. I talked to a woman where he boarded while at college, but she doesn't know what became of him. When he left he said something about going out to South Dakota. But that was four years ago."

"Was he militant?"

Connie nodded. "On Indian matters, yes. Belonged to a couple of militant campus groups. He could be our killer, if he's back in town."

The intercom buzzed and Leopold answered it. They heard a voice say, "Captain, this is Kohler in Communications. We've just had a radio report from one of the cars patrolling Maplegrove. It's the Depredator again!"

Harry Standing Elk knew what he had to do.

The apartment was no longer safe, and he must find a new one. More important, he must write out a list of his demands and make them known to the people of Maplegrove. The car was gone and he couldn't risk renting another. He could hardly call a taxi or ride the bus out there with his bow. That meant using his own car and taking the risk involved.

But first the note. He spent much of Sunday morning composing it until it was just right: "To the people of the Maplegrove development: You have slain my people, you have slain me! You have taken our sacred lands and despoiled them! No retaliation would be too great for the crimes you have committed against the American Indian! But I give you a chance

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to live! Abandon these sacred Mohegan grounds on which you dwell! Leave them as you found them, and no one else will die! If you do not listen, one of you shall die for each day you remain! The Depredator."

That was it, that was right.

He drove out once more to the familiar area and parked across the street from the largest church in the development. Services were in progress and the street was deserted. He was tempted to wait, hidden in the parking lot, and pick off the first person through the doors. But with his own car he could not risk it. There would be time for that later. Instead, he tied the message around the shaft of an arrow and aimed it at the church's great oak door. When it hit with a thud he felt just a little like Martin Luther.

Leopold read the message in the midst of a large circle of frightened Sunday worshippers. "There's nothing to fear," he assured them. "Go home now. The streets are well patrolled."

"Then why didn't someone see him do this?" an elderly lady asked.

Fletcher whispered into Leopold's ear. "The Commissioner himself is on the way out here. I just heard it on the radio. Let's go."

Leopold nodded. He liked to avoid the top brass when he was on a case. They only complicated things. "We'll check this note for prints," he assured the people. "Now go on your way!"

A television reporter and cameraman blocked his path to the car. "Will you release the text of the warning, Captain? Will you make a statement about it?"

"Later," Leopold muttered, brushing past them.

He went back to the office with Fletcher, wondering how long he had before the Commissioner would be on the phone. "Should I get coffee?" Fletcher asked.

"If the machine's working." He tossed some coins across the desk, nodding to Connie as she came in.

"What do you make of the note, Captain?"

"Not much." Leopold read it through again. "His use of *will* and *shall* in the past two sentences is quite proper, I think. Very few people use those words according to the rules."

"Maybe he was one of Furness' English students in addition to a folklore student."

Leopold grunted. "What about Standing Elk?"

"Elk?" Fletcher repeated, coming back with the coffee.

"Harry Standing Elk, the name Connie's checking on."

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He had an idea. "Did you try the newspaper, Connie? Their morgue might have some record if he was an active militant."

"Good idea. And someone should be there on Sunday."

"I talked to a guy named Elk," Fletcher was saying while Connie dialed the paper. "He had an apartment near where the car was found."

Connie was speaking to somebody on the phone. Leopold sipped the coffee and found it as bad as ever.

"*What?*" Connie exclaimed into the phone. "You're sure?"

"What is it, Connie?"

"Bad news on Harry Standing Elk. He's not the Depredator."

"How do you know?"

"Because he's dead. He was one of the militant Indians killed during the government's siege of Wounded Knee a couple of years back."

"Come on," Leopold said, on his feet. "Take us to this apartment you mentioned, Fletcher!"

The Sunday streets were nearly deserted as they sped across town. It was a beach-and-picnic sort of day, and Leopold was thankful for the lack of city traffic. It gave him time to talk as he drove.

"Those Indian tribes! Why would a militant take the name of an Iroquois folk hero to try to win back sacred Mohegan lands? The Mohegans—or Mohicans—weren't part of the Iroquois nation. In fact, they were bitter enemies, as any reader of Fenimore Cooper could tell you."

"That wouldn't mean anything to today's Indian," Connie argued, hanging on as Leopold took a corner without slowing down.

"Maybe, maybe not. But then there's that sacred Mohegan land. How did the killer even know about it? Professor Furness said it was a rare map."

"Maybe it was reproduced in a book sometime. Or maybe Standing Elk saw it while he was studying in Furness' class."

"But Standing Elk is dead, remember?"

Fletcher pointed through the windshield. "There's the apartment house, Captain."

Connie and Leopold spotted the man at the same instant. He was just loading a box into a car at the curb when Leopold swerved his vehicle into a wild U-turn.

"That's him!" Fletcher shouted. "That's Elk!"

Harry Standing Elk drove directly to the apartment from the church in Maplegrove. He knew it was risky, but it was more risky to abandon it completely. There was a suit of his

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clothes, with labels, in the closet. And some books and papers he hadn't risked leaving in the rented car. The place had to be emptied out, and quickly.

He managed to fit everything into a single box, then found the landlord and turned in his key. "Been called out of town," he said. "Be gone for a month or so."

"I can't keep the apartment that long."

"I know, I know," Harry told him. "I'll get another place when I come back."

"Where you goin'?" the landlord asked.

"Out west. Maybe South Dakota."

Then he carried the box of his possessions down to the street. He was just loading it into the car when he saw them—Leopold and those others. And they saw him.

Their car swerved around and came up onto the sidewalk in front of him. He dived for the back seat, pulling out the bow with its attached clip of arrows.

This now, this was the final battle.

Leopold had his gun out, but Standing Elk's arrow came up. He was faster, faster than the white oppressors. But then the other one fired through the car window and the bullet hit Standing Elk's arm as he released the arrow. It hit the roof of Leopold's car on an angle and was deflected off into the street.

He backed up, threading a second arrow despite the pain.

But then Leopold shouted something he couldn't hear and he felt his legs go out from under him. He was hit again. The bow slid across the sidewalk out of reach and then they were on him, pulling his good hand from the knife.

Shouting things he couldn't understand.

It was Wounded Knee again, and Sand Creek, and the Little Big Horn. He was Harry Standing Elk, trampled and bloody once more. But why, he wondered vaguely, why were they calling him Professor Furness?

"Q"

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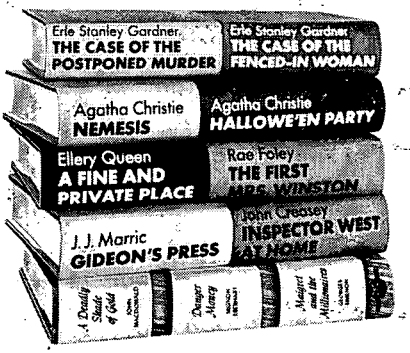

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